FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE USE

PSALMS IN MODERN SPEECH

Translated by Richard S. Hanson



VOLUME 1

INTRODUCTION, PSALMS 1-41

VOLUME 2 PSALMS 42-89

VOLUME 3

PSALMS 90-150

FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE USE

PSALMS IN MODERN SPEECH

Translated by Richard S. Hanson

VOLUME 1INTRODUCTION, PSALMS 1-41

The Psalms in Modern Speech

For Public and Private Use

translated by RICHARD S. HANSON

Volume 1—Introduction and Psalms 1-41 Volume 2—Psalms 42-89 Volume 3—Psalms 90-150

In rendering the Psalter usable both in group and private worship, this remarkable translation of the Book of Psalms also makes a solid contribution to scholarship.

The Psalms are divided into meaningful groups of two or more verses, with instructions for responsive reading by the Cantor, Choir I, and Choir II. The author has followed the meter and captured the movement of the Hebrew poetry. He has divided each Psalm for responsive reading in a way intended by the Hebrew rubrics. This system, together with the striking limpidity of the translation, provides the reader with a greater insight into the Psalms, and makes this book a valuable addition to the congregation's worship materials. The Introduction in Volume 1 is a thorough statement which introduces the non-specialist to the role of the Psalms in Old Testament life, to the linguistic problems of translation, and to the enriching possibilities which the Psalms offer to contemporary worship. Helpful notes are included at the end of each volume.

Richard S. Hanson is a member of the faculty of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa. His doctoral work was done at Harvard University.

cover art by Tom Irons

FORTRESS PRESS PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19129

\$1.95 each, \$5.50 a set

THE PSALMS IN MODERN SPEECH

Volume 1

THE PSALMS IN MODERN SPEECH

FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE USE

BY RICHARD S. HANSON VOLUME 1 PSALMS 1-41

39,963

FORTRESS PRESS PHILADELPHIA

© 1968 BY FORTRESS PRESS

Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 68-29463

Printed in the United States of America

6091C68 1-1028

TO MY WIFE,

who was amazingly patient about the whole affair,

and with a special thanks for those colleagues and friends whose critical evaluations were of such great help in the initial stages of this project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

tion	ix	Psalm	21		31
	1	Psalm	22		32
	2	Psalm	23		35
	3	Psalm	24		36
	4	Psalm	25		37
	5	Psalm	26		39
	6	Psalm	27		41
	7	Psalm	28		43
	9	Psalm	29		44
	10	Psalm	30		46
0	12	Psalm	31		47
1	14	Psalm	32		50
2	15	Psalm	33		51
3	17	Psalm	34		53
4	18	Psalm	35		56
5	19	Psalm	36		58
6	20	Psalm	37		59
7	21	Psalm	38		63
8	23	Psalm	39		64
9	28	Psalm	40		66
0	30	Psalm	41		68
Notes	·		73		
	0	1	1 Psalm 2 Psalm 3 Psalm 4 Psalm 5 Psalm 6 Psalm 7 Psalm 9 Psalm 10 Psalm 11 Psalm 12 Psalm 1 14 Psalm 2 15 Psalm 3 17 Psalm 4 18 Psalm 5 19 Psalm 5 19 Psalm 6 20 Psalm 7 21 Psalm 7 21 Psalm 8 23 Psalm 9 28 Psalm 9 28 Psalm	1 Psalm 22 2 Psalm 23 3 Psalm 24 4 Psalm 25 5 Psalm 26 5 Psalm 27 7 Psalm 28 9 Psalm 29 10 Psalm 30 0 12 Psalm 31 1 14 Psalm 32 2 15 Psalm 32 2 15 Psalm 33 3 17 Psalm 34 4 18 Psalm 35 5 19 Psalm 36 5 19 Psalm 36 6 20 Psalm 37 7 21 Psalm 38 8 23 Psalm 39 9 28 Psalm 40	1 Psalm 22 2 Psalm 23 3 Psalm 24 4 Psalm 25 5 Psalm 26 6 Psalm 27 7 Psalm 28 9 Psalm 29 10 Psalm 30 0 12 Psalm 31 1 14 Psalm 32 2 15 Psalm 32 2 15 Psalm 33 3 17 Psalm 34 4 18 Psalm 35 5 19 Psalm 36 6 20 Psalm 37 7 21 Psalm 38 8 23 Psalm 39 9 28 Psalm 40 0 30 Psalm 41

INTRODUCTION

The hymnbook of ancient Israel, more commonly called the Book of Psalms, is one of the most significant collections of liturgical literature ever compiled by any people. No one can begin to measure the extent of its influence. Its contents have served as the vehicle of prayer and praise for untold millions of Christians and Jews. It has been the favorite devotional book of innumerable saints and mystics. Its language and style have determined the character of most of the hymns and prayers of the Jewish and Christian traditions written since the time of its compilation, and it has even had some influence on other types of Western literature.

As a hymnbook it contains what we might expect: hymns, prayers, confessions of faith, and all the other familiar liturgical forms. As a hymnbook compiled at a certain point in history (perhaps the third century B.C.), it represents the traditions of a certain age—an age which begins with David and concludes with the Jews of the Hellenistic era. Thus it contains the worship literature of some seven centuries of Israel's history, though, to be sure, many of its psalms celebrate events which took place long before the time of David. Indeed, even the vocabulary and style of the earlier psalms were pretty well determined some time before anyone began to write them

on scrolls. Whether we speak in terms of its contents or style, the actual point of origin of this remarkable collection must be put at least as far back as the times of the tribal league or even earlier.

When we consider the broad span of time covered by these one hundred fifty familiar psalms, we realize that our fingers are feeling the pulse of a people, for here is the heartbeat of faith that was born out of a long and continuing experience with God. Here are reflected the great moments of Israel's history, both triumphs and tragedies, and here is the humble, daily fare of continuing worship. In this one collection of psalms we can trace every significant moment of Israel's history: the Exodus and the birth of the tribal league under Moses and Joshua, the gradual conquest of the promised land, the rise and development of all the beliefs and hopes which centered in the God-chosen kings of the Davidic line, the many victories and defeats and crises of the Israelite kingdoms, the fall of the North, the fall of the South and the shocking experience of the Exile, the return to Jerusalem, the dreams and toils that went into the building of the second temple, and the various trials of living as a little religious community in a big world of powerful kings and nations.

This is more than an interesting collection of ancient literature. It is a multi-voiced credo, the response of a people to the Almighty God who led them with stern kindness on a journey they never quite fully understood. To read these psalms is to bear the risk of being moved to prayer and praise, to join these people in their confession of faith.

Here we present a new translation of this ancient treasury of faith.

Some will no doubt react to this with a mild measure of scorn. "When," they may ask, "will we see the end of modern translations? Isn't the RSV sufficient for our generation? The appearance of new versions is only confusing. Why can't we have one official English translation and let it go at that?" Moreover, they may be aware of the fact that there are other modern versions of excellent caliber. At the popular level there is the exciting new Gelineau Psalter, published in the United States by the Westminster Press, and at the scholarly level we have the very significant new translation (only partially done to date) by Mitchell Dahood as part of The Anchor Bible, which is being published by Doubleday. Besides these, there are original translations in some of the better recent commentaries

Why, then, another translation?

Perhaps we should begin with a more basic question. Why any new translations at all? There are several good reasons.

In the first place, languages are constantly changing. This change, to be sure, is so slow and subtle that it almost defies detection, but unless we constantly keep abreast of it we shall once again be caught in the situation which prevailed before such translations as RSV and the New Catholic Bible "took over": the situation of a church which was using the Bible almost exclusively in a beautiful but sadly outdated and often enigmatic translation.

To keep up with the change in language the scholars of the Jewish and Christian traditions must continually be experimenting with new translations and publishing their results for the communities of believers. Only in this way can we do what is humanly possible to see that the Scriptures continue to communicate to modern man.

The second reason for the demand for new translations is the simple fact that we have not yet succeeded in adequately understanding some portions of the biblical texts. There are textual ambiguities, corruptions, and other kinds of difficulties which have not been solved by the scholarly work done to date. The process of scholarly study continues, however, and new solutions are being found at a fairly constant pace. New methods of research in the field of linguistics, new textual discoveries, and more information about the ancient world continue to enlarge our understanding. It is not fair that the churches remain ignorant of these advances. Therefore, it is necessary that those who study the texts and are attempting new and better translations present the results of their labors from time to time. The present writer humbly joins those who have preceded him in this attempt.

There is also room for continuing improvement in literary style. In part this means trying to find language that communicates in contemporary idiom. In part it means seeking beauty of expression. (We feel that the Gelineau Psalter has succeeded remarkably well in both respects.) The present translator is daring even one more thing: to capture the peculiar rhythms of the ancient Hebrew poetry, even to the point of creating a new style in Hebrew-to-English translations. The attempt is, of course, an experiment, and any critical reaction to it will be most helpful. An explanation of just what this means will be found in the discussion of Hebrew poetry which follows later in this Introduction.

We suspect that the average reader knows little of the state of biblical texts. In fact, it may have alarmed him even to suggest that at many points we have not up to this time fully understood them. The truth of the matter is this: the ancient biblical texts are unclear or corrupt in many places—and for a variety of reasons. Speaking on the basis of the Book of Psalms alone we can point out the following.

At some points the text is simply corrupt. In the process of transmission it has suffered damages, changes, omissions, or even additions. Most often these things occurred by accident, as in the process of copying, or by sheer physical damage to a scroll while the material was in storage or transit. Occasionally a change, omission, or addition would be deliberate.

In many instances the text is unclear simply because of its age. Perhaps a particular word or idiom, which was once clearly understood in a spoken stage of the language, occurs so rarely in the literature that we cannot determine its meaning with any degree of certainty. (Remember that we are dealing with a "dead" language and cannot check meanings by inquiring of informants.) Or it may be that we do not adequately understand the history of the language. Indeed, this is the case more often than one would think.

We have already reminded ourselves that language changes, necessitating new translations of ancient classics. This bears consideration in regard to our understanding of the original text as well. In the case of the Old Testament we are not dealing with just one kind of Hebrew. Inasmuch as the literature spans a millennium of time, we are dealing with the Hebrew language in many stages

of its development—not to mention the dialectical differences which exist in any language. To translate the Psalter or any other portion of the Old Testament adequately one must be aware of these important differences and attempt to cope with them.

Until recently this factor was scarcely comprehended by the translators. Now, however, the study of language from an historical point of view is being conducted at a lively pace in some of the leading centers of learning in the United States, Europe, and Israel. As one trained in one of these centers, the present translator believes that he has been able to solve many previously unsolved riddles. At the same time, however, he is painfully aware of the fact that many problems still remain and may remain for some time to come. This means that he offers to you not a perfect translation (a virtual impossibility) but what may be a significant step forward.

We feel that there are many things the reader should be aware of in order to use a translation such as this. At this point, therefore, we would like to offer a brief statement of various prerequisites.

Everyone who is acquainted with more than one language knows the difficulties of translating from one to the other, particularly if the material to be translated consists of carefully chosen words. In the case of translating from Hebrew to English the usual difficulties are only compounded. Here one is not moving between languages that are somewhat related, as, for example, in moving from German, French, or Latin to English. One is moving from one unique family of languages to another—from a Semitic to an Indo-European language. The differences are so

great that one can safely say that the two languages have little in common other than the fact that both represent attempts to solve the problems of communication through verbal utterances. There are simply no apparent relationships between the two.

ships between the two.

We can illustrate with a few examples.

The Hebrew vocabulary has many "big" words, that is, words that cover a wide range of meanings. An excellent example is the Hebrew word shalom. This word is normally translated into English as "peace." But this translation falls far short of matching the Hebrew term, for it only suggests a portion of its meaning, and not the central portion of that. The English word "peace" designates the absence of conflict. At the root of it is the notion of rest, colored and inactivity. Hebrew shalom however is a calmness, and inactivity. Hebrew *shalom*, however, is a very lively word. It suggests vitality, movement, and energy, for it designates all that leads to prosperity, health, wealth, and life itself. How can one capture this in a single English word? One can readily see that translating involves more than matching synonyms from two different languages!

The Hebrew term *besed* is a similar case in point. It has been variously translated. The old "King James" version rendered it as "lovingkindness." Many translators have chosen "mercy." The RSV translators coined the phrase "steadfast love." The concept is actually that of the freely pledged love of God which will continue despite our reaction simply because God has pledged it. It is close to the New Testament concept of *agape* (love) or *charis* (grace). In poetry one can scarcely afford to translate this with the cumbersome phrases that may cometimes be this with the cumbersome phrases that may sometimes be required to bring out the full implications of the word.

For this reason we have chosen in most cases to use the simple term "kindness," while occasionally using the term "grace" or a phrase which can draw out its full implications.

There are, of course, examples of an opposite type. In the English language we have some dozen words for the notion of sin. In Hebrew there are twice as many. How-does one reduce this wealth of words to half the number in another language? Surely some words will have to lose their distinctive character.

Of far greater significance than differences of vocabulary are those of structure and syntax. Here the differences are so radical and thoroughgoing that a summary description of the entire structure of the Hebrew language seems called for. Foregoing that for obvious reasons, we shall briefly describe some of the more important features, begging the reader to understand that the subject is far more complicated than we can indicate here.

Basic to our verb system is the notion of tense. The English-speaking man wants to know whether he is speaking of the past, the present, or the future. His verb system includes many other factors, to be sure, but tense seems to be a primary concern. (Recent studies in linguistics have shown, however, that tense is less of a factor than we had supposed.)

In Hebrew the form of the verb has little to do with tense. Where it might matter the Hebrew language has simple devices for designating time or, more often, sequence of action. For the most part, however, the time of action is of secondary importance or no concern at all. Other factors take precedence. Whether an act is viewed as a complete occurrence or as in the process of happen-

ing is a matter of significance. But even more important than this are the mood and the mode of action. The Hebrew language makes frequent use of forms which designate the involvement of will or strong intention, and it has separate verb forms to designate reflexive, iterative, and causative action as well as the passive and simple active. In short, the things that matter most in Hebrew are of lesser or no concern in English, while many of our favorite distinctions are of minor or no importance in Hebrew. As even a partially informed person may readily realize, this causes some baffling problems to the translator.

Hebrew prepositions present almost as much of a problem as the verb. To begin with, Hebrew has few prepositions and this means that each one must cover a great range of meanings. In the English language prepositions tend to cary rather specific meanings, though folk idioms will often defy the same. In Hebrew, however, idiom reigns supreme. The English reader must therefore understand that when a translator chooses a particular English preposition in his translation he may have made a very arbitrary choice. In short, one must put little definitive value on any preposition when he is reading material that was originally written in Hebrew.

Hebrew is a language of brevity. Linking and qualifying words are few in number. Adjectives and adverbs are sparingly used. Moreover, because in Hebrew the pronoun usually exists as a suffix or prefix to another word, much can be said with a minimum of words. Such a sentence as "I admonished him" is but one word in Hebrew. In fact, such a complicated statement as "you caused me to admonish him" is but two words.

One small complicating factor in Hebrew is the fact

that there is a distinction in number in the second as well as in the first and third person. In addition to "him/them" and "me/us" there is also "you-singular/you-plural." Very often it is impossible to carry this over into modern English, unless one fills his translation with repetitive uses of such a cumbersome phrase as "all of you."

One of the most interesting differences is the fact that the Hebrews used no neuter gender. There was no such thing as an "it." All things bore personality. Every object, animate or inanimate, was designated as either masculine or feminine. When a translator writes a lifeless "it" into his translation he sometimes feels as though he has betrayed a personal friend.

Perhaps even more important than the structural differences are the differences to be seen in the basic philosophy of language. To Westerners language is largely definitive. A word is a parcel containing an item of truth.

The Hebrews approached language quite differently. They understood it to be symbolic rather than definitive. A word was not a package, but only a little window through which one catches a glimpse of truth. In fact, they conceived no such abstract concept as truth and weighed things, rather, on the basis of their endurancepower or lack of it. By this token they would rate God as most "true" or enduring and man, in comparison, as a mere "breath" or "shadow." The more enduring a thing, the more elusive to man's comprehension. God and the things pertaining most closely to God were considered to be far beyond man's understanding. Hence, reality was filled with things that man could talk about and describe but never really comprehend. The function of language was merely to describe, to symbolize, to paint pictures, to suggest.

Thus the Hebrew language presents a way of thinking that is quite foreign to most of us. It is the child of another culture. Moreover this culture is ancient and much less sophisticated than ours. It was an agrarian and simple culture, operating in a world of symbols long lost to us. One can never perfectly relay and relate its literary treasures to a modern age and a foreign people. One can only work toward what is possible in the light of the many difficulties.

What makes poetry in human language? The simplest answer would go something like this: pleasing or exciting combinations of sounds, rhythms, and ideas. But to answer the question in regard to a single language requires a more specific answer than this.

We have many ideas of what makes poetry in the English language. Some of them are well-established and traditional. Other pages is a simple stable of them are well-established and traditional.

tional. Others are considered avant-garde. We associate certain syllabic rhythms with poetry, certain phrases, certain images. We like sounds that produce effect or rhyme. Sometimes we like combinations of sounds, words, and ideas simply because they are poignant and provoking. There are many things that work together to make poetry in our language.

But there are quite another set of factors that make poetry in Hebrew. Some of them are similar to our poetic techniques. Others seem exotic to us. To help the reader understand what faces the translator at this point, let us explore some of the features of Hebrew poetry.

Hebrew poetry operates with a sort of rhythm that is based on major word stress rather than syllable count (though this was not always so, for we suspect that in the earliest stage syllable beat was more important). The

reason is that every single word or word-unit (sometimes made up of more than one word) tends to have a single major stress. The "beat" of Hebrew poetry depends on the number of such major stresses in the line.

For the most part, there are two kinds of cola or "half-lines": the short and the long. A short colon contains two major stresses and a long one, three. Occasionally one encounters a colon with four stresses and only rarely one longer than that. In the latter case one is more nearly correct in saying that the poetry has been interrupted with a line of prose.

The earliest Hebrew poets, who copied well-established Canaanite models, preferred the predominant use of the short colon with an occasional long one or a pair of long cola to close a stanza or conclude the poem. There are many examples of this early style in the Psalter. Here is a fine sample from Psalm 29. (We have furnished accent marks in our translation to guide the reader at this stage.) Note the rugged rhythm that is produced as you read it aloud:

Ascribe to The Lord,
you sons of the gods,
ascribe to The Lord
honor and strength!
Ascribe to The Lord
the glory of his name!

As time went on the Israelite poets came to prefer the long colon in consecutive chains or subtle combinations of long and short cola. One of the cleverest and most beautiful combinations they invented was the so-called *Qinab* (Kee-

nah) or "limping" meter. This is produced by a series of long-followed-by-short cola. The result is a smoothly flowing five-beat pattern which has just enough rhythm to be felt but at a slow enough pace as to almost defy detection. It is found in many psalms and we think it is lovely. Here is a familiar example:

You spread out the table before me in front of my foes.
You anoint my head with oil; as my cup overflows.
Yes, kindness and goodness pursue me all through my life.
I will dwell in the house of The Lord as long as I live.

To date no translator has seriously tried to reproduce this Hebrew notion of rhythm and meter in the English language. The writer is convinced that it can be done, however, and this translation represents his attempt. He believes that there are natural word-stresses in the English language which can be utilized to this end and that only occasionally does one have to emphasize a particular word or syllable artificially to get the stress desired. We think that the reader will quickly and naturally discover how to read these translations in such a way as to capture that stress and rhythm.

The most important feature of Hebrew poetry is a device known as parallelism. Since this feature is easily translated into other languages it has now been familiar for a long time to all who have read the Bible. Indeed, an examination

THE PSALMS IN MODERN SPEECH

of the literature of Christendom will reveal that many non-Semitic writers have consciously or unconsciously adopted the style as their own!

For the sake of those who do not fully understand what we mean by parallelism let us offer a simple explanation with a few examples.

Parallelism is the pairing or chaining of lines on the basis of their similarity of meaning and/or structure. There are many varieties of it. Most commonly in the Psalter we encounter what is best termed as synonymous parallelism, wherein two or more lines say the same thing in varying terminology. For example:

```
My rebellions I know full well;
my sin is ever before me.

(from Psalm 51)

Sing unto God!

Chant forth his name! (from Psalm 68)

I entered this life with evil;
with sin my mother conceived me.

(from Psalm 51)
```

As simple and direct as the first type is what is known as antithetic parallelism, wherein the second line states the opposite of the first. This type is relatively rare in the Psalter, but exceedingly common in the Book of Proverbs. To illustrate:

The Lord gives relief to the needy but bends the wicked to the ground. (from Psalm 147)

Parallelism may be purely structural, which is to say that xxii

the second line may match the first in meter but not in meaning. In such a case the second line usually extends the thought of the first, as in this example from Psalm 71:

O God, you have taught me since childhood and I still proclaim your wonders.

Very frequently we find lines that are partially parallel in thought and completely or partially parallel in meter. Here, again, a few examples will demonstrate what we mean. The first is from Psalm 92. Note that there is nothing in the second line which is truly parallel to "it is good" in line one:

It is good to confess The Lord's praise, to sing to the name of The Highest.

Our second example is from Psalm 98. The entire thought of line two is an extended parallelism for "shout" in line one. There is nothing to match "to The Lord, O Earth." Two more examples of a similar nature follow it, one from Psalm 18, the other from Psalm 24:

Shout to The Lord, O Earth! Break forth with music and singing!

I love you, O Lord, my strength, O Lord, my rock cliff.

The Lord owns the earth and its contents the world and its creatures.

A bit of applied imagination will convince one that the device known as parallelism offers many possibilities for creativity in the structure of a poem. A poet could continue a chain of parallel lines as long as he pleased. He could enrich his images by using all the synonyms in his vocab-

ulary. With inversions and other variations he could create an infinite variety of patterns. If the reader reads with awareness he will see how freely and ingeniously the Hebrew poets used this simple device.

Quite interestingly, the Hebrew poets did not develop and work within carefully defined metrical forms, such as the sonnet in our tradition. They preferred freedom in determining the length and structure of their works. Part of the reason for this is that the Hebrew poet was not primarily an artist in love with his art. He was first and foremost a prophet, a priest, or a pious person expressing his faith in God. Moreover, he was often writing words that were meant to be subordinated to a chant tune or accompanying music.

There is only one distinctively Hebrew form which was restrictive in its form. That is the acrostic poem, a composition in which the first letter of each line or of a series of lines begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in its proper alphabetical order. There are eight such compositions in the Psalter: psalms 9–10 (which together form an imperfect acrostic), 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, and 145. Psalm 119 is the queen of them all, for in that long poem the author has begun the first eight lines with 'aleph, the second eight lines with beth, the third eight with gimel, etc. It must have required a prodigious amount of work.

Needless to say, it is next to impossible to translate these so that they come out at once as good poetry, accurate translations and acrostics in the English language. (Indeed, they are not always the best of poetry in Hebrew.)

Imagery is one of the basic ingredients of poetry in any language. In effect, a poet is an artist who is attempting to paint pictures with words. What kind of pictures will he

paint? This depends on his own environment and his reactions to it.

The Hebrew writers had an environment considerably different from ours and a way of reacting that was just as unique.

To begin with, that environment was quite primitive compared with ours. This is a factor which ought never to be underestimated. To read Hebrew literature of the Old Testament is to make a long journey into the past. One must enter a world which had not yet been affected by scientific, objective thought, a world which was still small and alive with primitive powers. One must forget the great social and intellectual revolutions that have taken place since then. One must shed all his modern presuppositions and enter: a world of shepherds and sheep, of farmers with hand tools, of men treading grapes with their feet and winnowing their grain by hand, of women carrying water from natural springs or hand-dug wells in earthen jars on their heads; a world where family life predominates, where father and grandfather carry great influence, where people live close to all their relatives and in-laws, where marriages are planned by families and where the family itself is absorbed into the greater family of the tribe, the clan, the people; a world where wars are fought with daggers and spears, with bows and arrows, where conflict is still interpersonal and the most formidable weapons yet invented are the chariot and the battering ram, where the horse is equivalent to the tank and the valiant hero may be a king's secret weapon; a world still close to nature, where in the sound of nature are the voices of God or the gods, where men look with awe at the lightning and tremble before thunder, where a bubbling spring may mean the difference between life and death, and where men live so close to the earth that they are tempted to worship it.

And, above all, one must enter a world that is alive and personal. Perhaps the most unique thing about the Hebrew poetic imagery is the fact that it treats all subjects as though they possess personality, and hence verbs are preferred to adjectives. Rarely did the Hebrew poet describe color or form. He preferred, rather, to speak of action, feeling, or speech. His world was a world of moving forces to which he had to react. It was not only his language which "lacked" a neuter gender. He himself saw everything as either masculine or feminine. Everything possessed "soul" to some degree and called for personal response. He generally avoided abstract terminology and attempted to describe his subjects in action-images. Here are a few examples of what we mean.

When the poet wanted to describe God he usually described him as doing something-saving, helping, scolding, judging, speaking, thundering, or withholding his presence. When he wanted to describe his own misery or suffering he preferred to do it in terms of picturing enemies -visible or invisible-who tormented, accused, threatened, struck at, or laid traps for him. When he wanted to talk about happiness he described it in terms of a man shouting and laughing, a tree bearing fruit as it grows, sweet-smelling oil running down the head and beard of a priest, or healthy young people eating a hearty meal. In short, his favorite images were figures in motion—lions crouching for prey, a warrior drawing his bow, a stormcloud moving across the sky, or a mourner walking about in sackcloth. His poetry breathed with the activity of life.

We have called the Book of Psalms "the Hymnbook of Ancient Israel." And that is precisely what it is: an ancient service book and hymnal. Its compositions are liturgical. It is not primarily a collection of poetry nor even of private devotional literature. It is, indeed, almost entirely poetic in form, and it has been used devotionally by saints of many generations. But, in origin, most of its hymns, prayers, and other types of liturgies were created for public worship. It is a collection of compositions written for the use of a community of believers.

The things written in this collection are as various in age, in type, and in style as one could imagine. There are psalms which quite likely go back, in their original form at least, to the time of the united kingdom if not earlier and there are psalms from as late as the third or second century B.C. Some of these can be dated by their style, though a tendency toward archaism in liturgical compositions makes this difficult at times.

The Psalter itself furnishes many clues to its own history and development. On the surface of it all, it is quite apparent that what we possess is a collection of collections. Noting the headings of individual psalms we find such groups as psalms "for David" (Psalms 3-41, 51-71, 138-145), psalms "for the Sons of Qorah" (42-49, 84-85, 87-88), psalms "for Asaph" (73-83), a group whose title we have translated as "psalms of the stairs" (120-134), and two groups of "hallelujah" psalms (111-118 and 145-150).

There are indications that some of these collections are partly parallel in nature. Psalms 14 and 53 are the same and Psalm 108 is merely a combination of Psalm 57:8–12 and Psalm 60:7–14. Besides that there are many cases in

which two versions of a single psalm seem to have been put together to make one, new, conflate version.

There were, then, several independent collections preceding the single collection we know as the Book of Psalms today. Some of them may have existed at other shrines, such as Bethel, before they were brought together for use in Jerusalem. Moreover, the Psalter as we know it is not the only version of a final collection. It is well known that the Septuagint (a term used to describe the ancient Alexandrian Greek version of the Old Testament) has some materials not found in the traditional Hebrew version (Psalm 151 and a few other segments of psalms) and that it numbers the psalms differently in part.

If we compare these two versions in tabular form we get the following picture:

Septuagint Version	Hebrew (Masoretic) Text
1-8	1–8
9	9–10
10-112	11-113
113	114–115
114-115	116
116-145	117–146
146-147	147
148-150	148-150
151	

The partial scroll of psalms found in Cave Eleven of the Qumran group (11QPsa) reveals a manuscript which had an order different from either of these and several compositions neither in the Hebrew nor in old Greek versions. (See Discoveries in the Judean Desert of Jordan: IV. The Psalms Scroll of Qumran Cave 11 by J. A. Sanders, Oxford University Press, 1965.)

The various psalms were composed by a variety of occasions and uses and there are many ways to categorize them on the basis of this. Most well-known of all schemes of categorization are those proposed by Hermann Gunkel prior to World War I (published by Begrich in 1933). According to this scheme there are five major and seven minor types of psalms. The five major types are: (1) hymns of praise (with a special type for the enthronement festival), (2) laments of the community, (3) royal psalms, (4) laments of the individual, and (5) thanksgiving of the individual. The seven minor types: (1) blessings and curses, (2) pilgrim psalms, (3) thanksgiving of the Israelite nation, (4) legends, (5) psalms dealing with the law, (6) prophetic psalms, and (7) wisdom psalms. (See also Gunkel's *The Psalms—A Form-Critical Introduction*, trans. T. M. Horner. Philadelphia: Fortress Introduction, trans. T. M. Horner. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967.)

One can categorize the psalms on the basis of content, information from the superscriptions, or internal clues of various sorts. Regardless of how one does it, there are many psalms which must be labeled a mixed type.

We would propose a simple scheme for dividing them. Basing our judgments largely on content, we would

suggest that there are, broadly speaking, three major types: the hymn, the prayer, and the didactic or prophetic poem. In addition to this we would say that many psalms are liturgical antiphonies which involve elements of more than one type.

By hymn we mean a psalm which confesses the greatness of God and his acts. By prayer we mean a psalm which confesses the needs of the worshipper, his trust in God, and his plea for help. By didactic or prophetic poem we mean those compositions in which a priest, worshipper,

or prophet addresses the community for the purpose of instruction or to move its members to confession.

At the heart of all three types is the notion of confession—man confessing God's greatness, man confessing his own need to God, man confessing his faith to his neighbor. This leads us to say that confession is the heart of worship. Moreover, it would suggest that there is in man a deep need to adore something beyond himself, a need to practice catharsis of his anxieties and guilts and to cry out for help, and to state his convictions to others.

We have included introductory notes for some of the psalms and these will partly inform the reader as to their special purpose or function. Perhaps, however, a few general remarks would be in order here.

Hebrew worship revolved around the great festivals and the sabbaths. Because of the general nature of a sabbath ritual it is difficult to suggest just which psalms were designed for use on such an occasion. But as far as the great festivals were concerned, we know enough about the distinctive emphases of each to furnish some helpful guidelines. To be sure, a thorough discussion of them would be most helpful-and to that end we would recommend the reading of such sources as Worship in Israel by Hans-Joachim Kraus (English translation and publication by John Knox Press, 1965) or the section entitled "Religious Institutions" (Part IV, pp. 271-518) in Roland deVaux's Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions (English translation by John McHugh, published by McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1961). But to avoid undue length in this Introduction we shall limit our remarks to brief discussions.

Sigmund Mowinckel of Norway, as well as other scholars, has pointed out that many psalms were written for the liturgies which accompanied the crowning of the Davidic king in Jerusalem. (We would highly recommend the reading of his two-volume work, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, English translation by D. R. Ap-Thomas, Abingdon Press, 1962). These are known as royal or messianic psalms and include all of our three types. At the heart of them is the notion of God ruling his people—and the world—through his chosen servant, the son of David. There is even the claim that this was an annual affair and was performed in conjunction with one of the three great annual festivals of the Hebrew religious calendar.

The great moments in Israel's religious life were the great pilgrimage festivals. By the time the Old Testament era had come to a close it has been established that there were three festivals, though various groups of Israelites perhaps recognized or celebrated only one yearly festival in the beginning (cf., for example, I Samuel 1:3). Those three feasts were (1) Passover and Unleavened Bread, (2) the Feast of Weeks, and (3) the Feast of Tents.

The Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread (Massoth) seems to have been two ancient feasts eventually combined into one—in part, perhaps, because both were celebrated at the same time. The sources (Exod. 12; 23:15; 34:18, 25; Deut. 16:1–8; Lev. 23:5–8, and others) are of such a nature as to make it very difficult to trace the separate origins of each. The most that we can suggest is that Passover, because of its sacrificial lamb, had its origin among the sheep-herding nomads of Israel's ancestry and that Massoth. because of the centrality of the bread,

reflects a grain-growing culture. At any rate, by the time the two are combined and given their symbol-meaning for Israel's faith, they are the commemoration of that greatest of all events in the history of the Chosen People: the Exodus. Hence, Exodus 12 and a hymn like that of Exodus 15 explain the meaning of the ritual, and any of the psalms which celebrate the Exodus or events related to it may well have been composed for the occasion of this feast.

The second great feast was known by more than one name. In Exodus 23:16 it is called the harvest feast. In Exodus 34:22 it is identified as the feast of the wheat harvest. Because it was dated seven weeks after *Massoth* it gained the popular name of Feast of Weeks. This festival centered around the grain harvest and was a thoroughly joyous occasion. We can be reasonably sure that some of the hymns celebrating harvest and the power of God in nature were especially written for recitation at this feast.

Quite late in the Old Testament era this feast was designated to be a commemoration of the giving of covenant law at Mt. Sinai. This may be the reason that Psalm 19, which begins as a hymn extolling God's works in nature, closes as a hymn in praise of God's law.

In the autumn came the great festival called Succoth ("tents" or "huts"). In earlier times it seems to have been referred to as the feast of "ingathering" (of fruits) and may have been the single yearly feast of some of the Israelite tribes. At a later date it was recognized as the greatest of the three annual pilgrimages. The "huts" (succoth) which gave the feast one of its names may have originally been a reference to huts built for temporary dwellings out in the vineyards and orchards

during harvest, but later they were made to commemorate the time when Israel lived in tents in the wilderness. To begin with this was a merry feast but eventually, and largely due to the Exile, the great and solemn Day of Atonement was joined to it.

Many scholars believe that the royal liturgies were associated with the autumn feast of *Succoth* and that the messianic laments gave rise to at least some of the features of the Day of Atonement.

In addition to the great festivals there came to be daily, weekly, and monthly rituals performed at the temple. As previously noted, the general nature of these services makes it difficult to assign specific psalms to such occasions.

Besides the liturgies which were recited at the religious services there were, of course, many kinds of offerings and sacrifices, the burning of incense, and other dramatic enactments. The offerings themselves were of different types. Some were understood as simple gifts of thanksgiving to God. Others involved the taking of animal life as an expiation for sin. A gift given to God was normally burned—completely or in part. The temple workers and priests received portions in many cases, and there were even affairs in which the worshippers would join in feasting on what they had brought.

We have insisted quite strongly that the psalms were designed for public worship at these various occasions. Now we shall qualify that in part. During the Exile, when the temple services were suspended, we see the first compositions of a new type of psalm: a prayer or meditation designed for the small group or even for private use. Among such are the acrostic psalms, which were surely

meant to please the eye more than the ear and, hence, could only have been enjoyed privately.

Both the Hebrew and Greek texts furnish introductory notes and directions for most of the psalms. In general this information is of little or no value to the modern reader. Indeed, some of the terms commonly used are so enigmatic as to be of no use to anyone.

Here is a list of the terms which are found in those ancient superscriptions with their meanings or suggestions as to what they might have signified.

Technical titles

mizmor The most common of all technical titles, occurring fifty-three times in the Psalter. We translate it as "psalm." The verbal root seems to mean "make music."

tephillah "A prayer." It is found in psalms 17, 86, 90, 102, and 142

shir "A song." It is found eleven times.

'eduth "A testimony," that is, something which bears witness. It is found in psalms 80 and 60 (where it may be part of the title of a chant tune).

tebillab Found only in Psalm 145, it must mean "a hymn of praise," since it comes from the verbal root which means boast or praise. The entire Psalter bears the plural of this word as its title in the Hebrew text.

shiggaion Since the meaning is uncertain we merely transliterate it in the one place where it occurs (Psalm 7)

miktam Since the meaning is uncertain we merely transliterate it whenever it occurs (Psalms 16, 56–60).

maskil Perhaps, "a meditation." We merely transliterate it whenever it occurs.

Proper names

In seventy-three psalms we find the heading ledawid, which can be translated "of David," "for David," or "by David" and may signify a number of things (the Hebrew preposition is just that indeterminate). Traditionally it has been believed that such psalms were written by David. This can hardly be the case, for the compositions so titled are too varied in age, style, and content to be by one author. We suggest that it either designates a psalm of the Davidic, or royal, collection or that such psalms were written in honor of the great king or some episode in his life. Indeed, both may be the case. We translate the phrase "for David." In a similar manner we understand and translate the following:

"For Asaph" Asaph, according to I Chronicles 15:16 and 19; 25:1-9; Ezra 2:41; and Nehemiah 7:44, was the patriarch of a family or guild of temple musicians. His name occurs at the head of Psalms 50 and 73-83.

"For the sons of Qorah" The Korahites were a family of temple singers of rather early origin. Psalms 42, 44–49, 84–85, and 87–88 are of this collection. "For Heman the Ezrahite" Found in the heading for Psalm 88. According to I Kings 4:31 this man

Psalm 88. According to I Kings 4:31 this man was a sage of the tribe of Judah. Apparently another Heman (the Kohathite) was one of the leaders of temple musicians under David and Solomon (I Chron. 15:17 and 19), or else there is confusion in the sources.

"For Ethan the Ezrahite" Found in the heading for Psalm 89. Again, I Kings 4:31 indicates that he was a sage of the tribe of Judah while I Chronicles 15:17 and 19 speaks of an Ethan ben Koshaiah who was a temple musician under David and Solomon.

"For Jeduthun" This occurs with Psalm 39. Jeduthun was the patriarch of a family or guild of temple musicians dating from David's time. In two psalms (62 and 77) we find the phrase "upon Jeduthun" which suggests that there was also a tune (see below) by this name.

"For Solomon" and "for Moses" need no explanation.

Musical notations

We must divide these into two groups. First, there is a group of terms which seem to denote the names of chant tunes (we use the word "tune" loosely here, for the Western ear would probably describe any Near Eastern tunes as wailing chants), whose titles we transliterate here.

Muth lubben "Death for the son" or "death whitens" (Psalm 9).

Ayeleth hashahar "Doe of the dawn" (Psalm 22).

Shoshanim "Lilies" (Psalms 45, 69, 80).

Shushan 'eduth Meaning is uncertain (Psalm 60).

Mobloth "Sickness," though it may bear some meaning we do not know (Psalms 53 and 88).

Yonath elem r'hoqim "Dove of the far-off terebinths" (Psalm 56).

Some notations seem to indicate directions for manner of chanting or for musical accompaniment. Seven times we meet the term "in neginoth," which may mean "with strings." Once we encounter "in nehiloth," which may mean "with flutes." "Upon sheminith" the eighth) and "upon 'alamoth" (maidens) may refer to pitch and voicing.

Instruction for liturgical usage or setting

Most common of all terms in this category is the Hebrew lamenaseah. Its meaning is somewhat uncertain. The early Greek translators rendered it into Greek as eis to telos. Many modern translators have taken it to mean something like "for the director" or "to the choir master," which would mean that any information following would be appropriate to such an official. The word comes from a verbal root which has to do with reaching a point of eminence or lasting to the end. We have chosen, with some uncertainty, to follow the old Greek translations and render it "for the conclusion," meaning that it designates a psalm as the climax or concluding point of a worship service. Other terms in this category are as follows:

- "For the sabbath day" (Psalm 92).
- "Song of loves" A royal wedding song? (Psalm 45).
- "For memorial" That is, to accompany a memorial offering (Psalms 38 and 70).
- "(At) the dedication of the house (i.e., temple)"
 Perhaps used also for an anniversary of such an occasion (Psalm 30).
- "For confession" That is, for praise-confession and in conjunction with a thank-offering (several psalms).

"Song of the stairs" A psalm possibly sung by or for pilgrims as they entered or approached the temple compound (Psalms 120–134).

"For instruction" That is, a didactic psalm (Psalm 60).

For the mysterious term, *Selah*, which occurs in the text of many psalms, we offer no suggestions at all. We simply do not know what it means.

Since the psalms were written for liturgical usage they ought not to be considered literature in the narrowest sense of the term. Some psalms, to be sure, are truly noble poetry. They are masterfully written and profound in content. Many are badly written and trite, unimaginatively composed of timeworn clichés. Most lie somewhere between these two extremes.

This translator has not tried to make all the psalms beautiful from a literary point of view. Where he has sensed literary greatness he has tried his best to recapture it in English, but where he has found mediocrity he has relayed it as such to the English reader. Anything other than this would be dishonest.

One of the curious problems of translating any part of the Old Testament is the question of how to translate the Hebrew names for God. Among many other titles, the Hebrews made predominant use of two: 'elohim ("God," the plural of an old Semitic name for the president-god) and yahweh ("he causes to be" or "he is"). The former gives us no difficulty. We merely translate it as "God." But yahweh presents great difficulties.

The basic problem is this: at some stage in their history, very likely during the Persian era, the Jews stopped pro-

nouncing the divine name. This was, of course, a matter of supreme respect and piety. Whenever they encountered the divine name they substituted the title *donai*, which means "lord" or "master." In some ancient scrolls and in parts of the Septuagint we can see how scribes even substituted *donai* for yahweh in the writing. In most cases, however, they left the four letters of yahweh (yhwh: in classic Hebrew orthography vowels were, for the most part, omitted) and expected the reader to make the substitution as he read.

Much later, in the Christian era, Jewish scribes began to provide vowel markings for the biblical texts, apparently to retain the proper pronunciation of it. Quite interestingly, they did not provide the vowels that would make yhwh into "Yahweh." Instead, and to make sure that the reader would remember the proper substitution, they furnished the vowels appropriate to "donai. This made yhwh appear as though it should be pronounced "Yehowah" and hence the well-known "Jehovah," a complete misunderstanding of the Hebrew text! (The "e" and the "a" written above the line are merely the designation for the shewa, whose vowel character was freely changeable, depending on what consonant was adjacent to it.)

Now, how shall the translator deal with this divine name? Shall he do as many modern scholars and translators do—boldly write it in its ancient form as "Yahweh"? Or should he adopt the time-hallowed title, "The Lord"? Certainly we do not wish to perpetuate the foolish mistake of "Jehovah."

Inasmuch as our term "The Lord" has been sanctified by usage, it carried some of the same sense of respect and awe which accompanied the utterance of "Yahweh" by ancient Hebrew lips. Moreover, the title "lord" designates a kind of sovereignty which belonged to the meaning of yahweh. (Judging from Exod. 3:14 the divine name, like many ancient names, must have been a complete sentence. We would read it as a formula with causative verb forms and translate it as "I cause to be what I cause to be." Put that into the third person and it becomes yhwh 'šr yhwh—"he causes to be what he causes to be"—and yahweh is an abbreviation of that.) For these two simple reasons we have chosen to use "The Lord" as a consistent translation for yhwh. Moreover, we feel that "Yahweh" would appear to be too cold and scholarly for the average reader. We were tempted, however, to use something like "The Creator."

One of the abiding values of the Psalter is its continued usage in public worship. To facilitate that we have set up many of the psalms for antiphonal reading or chanting. In doing so we have not pretended to know just how they were originally used, though some have very obvious choral or congregational responses. All that we attempt is a reasonable approximation of what was done in the ancient worship practice of Israel and, after all, we can expect that they may have performed them in more than one manner. Where we have not included notations for antiphonal reading the reader may feel free to merely alternate stanzas between the two (or more) parts.

We object to the unimaginative way in which these psalms have been chopped up by Westerners for antiphonal use in the various hymnals at large. One should at least pay attention to the rules of Hebrew parallelism and regard natural stanza breaks. Some psalms defy any kind of antiphonal arrangement and so we leave them untouched.

Where we have set them up for antiphonal usage we suggest one or two choirs (which could be a congregation as a whole or in divisions) and a cantor. Who is chosen to read the parts is relatively unimportant. The more important thing is to observe the division points we suggest. We trust that the reader will see the logic of what we have done. At times our chief clue to divisions has been the alternating shift between the second and third person in the verbs.

As our final message in this Introduction we would like to say a few things about the notes which we furnish with the translations themselves. Where we have included introductory notes they are primarily for the average and somewhat uninformed reader. The footnotes, on the other hand, are for both that man and any chance scholar who may be curious about some radical deviation we have made in comparison to other translations. That is to say that some of the footnotes will make sense only to those who are somewhat familiar with the Hebrew text and the ancient versions.

Our translation has been basically from the so-called Masoretic text, the commonly accepted Hebrew text of the Old Testament (referred to as "Heb" in our notes). Where we have felt that it offers a more correct reading or serves to clarify an obscure or corrupt reading in the Hebrew, we have followed the ancient Greek versions ("Gk"), the Syriac ("Syr"), or the Targums ("Targ"). Toward the end of the Psalter we have made great use of the Psalms Scroll from Qumran Cave 11 (11QPsa).

Some readers may be alarmed at the number of notes indicating that the Hebrew is unclear, obscure, uncertain, or corrupt. To what degree is this the case? Many psalms suffer from some minor corruptions or obscurities. Some,

like Psalm 87, are in seriously bad condition. In this translation we have chosen to be conservative in relation to the original texts. If there is even a slight obscurity or corruption it is usually noted. It must be noted, however, that many obscurities and even some cases of corruption will be clarified as scholarly studies progress, for it is our lack of knowledge that makes many portions of the text appear obscure. Indeed, Dahood's new translation in The Anchor Bible bears promise of clarifying many points hitherto unexplained, and it is hoped that this translation will move us ahead at a few points as well. (In our notes we shall refer to The Anchor Bible as ANB.) Our verse numbering follows the Hebrew text, which means that it will disagree by one verse with RSV most of the time.

This is a didactic poem and one of the latest compositions in the Psalter. Note the masterful way in which the writer has made use of parallelism.

CANTOR

Happy is the man
 who walks not the way of the wicked,
 who treads not the highway of sin
 nor sits in the seat of the cynic,
 because he delights in The Lord's instruction
 and studies that teaching both day and night!

CHOIR

³ He becomes like a tree planted by rivers of water, bearing its fruit in due season, with leaves that are always green. In all that he does he succeeds.

CANTOR

- ⁴ Not so the wicked, for he is like the windblown chaff.
- ⁵ Therefore the wicked cannot stand in judgment nor sinners in the righteous assembly.

CHOIR

⁶ The Lord watches over the path of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads nowhere.

This is a hymn for the coronation of the king and undoubtedly one of the oldest of its type. It contains a prophetic oracle which must have played a part in establishing the idea of God's special covenant with the ruling house of David.

CHOIR I

- ¹ Why are the nations, assembling the peoples, mustering troops, ¹
- ² the kings of the earth declaring positions, the rulers consulting together against The Lord, against His Anointed?
- ³ "Let us tear off their fetters! Let us cast off their bonds!"

CHOIR II

- ⁴ He who dwells in the heavens is laughing; The Master derides them all.
- ⁵ He speaks to them in his wrath; in his anger he puts them in fear.
- 6 "I have anointed my king on Zion, my holy hill."

CANTOR

- ⁷ Let me proclaim the decree of The Lord.² He told me, "You are my son.

 Today I bring you to birth.
- S Ask me and I will give you nations as your inheritance,
 - your holdings to the ends of the earth.
- You will crush them³ with a club of iron; like a potter's bowl you will break them."

CHOIR

- 10 So now, O kings, take heed! Watch out, you rulers of earth!
- ¹¹ Bow down to The Lord with fear. Dance with trembling, O mortals⁴ lest he destroy you in anger,
- 12 for his wrath is swiftly kindled.

CHOIR II

Happy are all who trust him!

PSALM 3

A psalm for David in his flight from Absalom his son.

CANTOR

- ² O Lord, how my foes have increased! How many are rising against me!
- "How many who say of my life,
 "There is no help from God for him"!

Selah

- ⁴ You, Lord, are my lifelong master¹ my honor, my reason for pride.
- When I cry aloud to The Lord he responds from his holy hill.

Selah

- ⁶ As for me, I can lie down and sleep, then arise, for The Lord sustains me.
- ⁷ I fear not though thousands of men gather around to oppose me.

8 Arise, Lord! Save me, my God! You can slap the face of my foes and break the teeth of the wicked.

CHOIR

9 Salvation, O Lord! May your blessing rest on your people!

PSALM 4

For the conclusion. On the neginoth. A psalm for David. Verses 5-6 are a bit obscure in this psalm. We offer a translation which supposes the quotation of an old formula of liturgical instruction.

CANTOR

- ² Answer when I call, my Victorious God! When I am oppressed release me! Have mercy and hear my prayer!
- ³ How long, O men, will you insult my Glory worship deceit, and seek what is false?
- ⁴ Understand that The Lord will rescue¹ his saint. The Lord will hear when I call him.

CHOIR

- Tremble and sin not, examine your conscience, lament in your bed,
- offer right offerings and trust in The Lord.

CANTOR

Many say, "Who can bring good? Smile upon us, O Lord!"²

- ⁸ You have put more joy in my heart than a bountiful harvest of crops.
- ⁹ I can lie down in peace; I can sleep. Only you, Lord, permit me to lie down in trust.

For the conclusion. On the flutes. A psalm for David.

CANTOR

- ² Lend an ear to my words, O Lord; listen to my sighing.
- ³ Hearken to the sound of my cry, my King and my God,¹ for to you I am praying!¹

CHOIR

⁴ O Lord, hear my voice in the morning, as I ready myself to await you.²

CANTOR

- ⁵ You are not a god who likes evil; you cannot stand sin.
- ⁶ A man cannot boast in front of your gaze. You hate all those who do mischief;
- ⁷ you destroy those who deceive.

CHOIR

The Lord abhors those who cling to vain idols.3

CANTOR

⁸ Because of your abundant kindness, I can enter your house.

I can bow at your holy temple in reverence for you.

9 In your righteousness lead me, O Lord, despite my enemies.

Lay straight your pathway before me.

- There is no truth in their mouths; they are treacherous within. Their throats are like open tombs; their tongues speak deceit.
- Declare them guilty, O God! Let them fall by their own designs! For all their transgressions reject them! They rebel against you.

CHOIR

- 12 Let all who trust you be glad. Let them sing forever! Protect those who love your name and so let them boast!⁵
- ¹³ May you constantly bless the righteous, O Lord! Like a shield may your favor surround him!

PSALM 6

For the conclusion. With strings (?). On the eighth (tone?). A psalm for David.

This psalm was obviously composed for the use of believers who were suffering from sickness.

² O Lord, do not in your anger rebuke me! Do not in your wrath chastise me!

- ³ Be merciful, Lord, for I have grown feeble! Heal me, O Lord! I tremble in terror.
- 4 My life is in terrible danger. You, O Lord! How long?
- Turn, O Lord! Spare my life!
 Save me! Your kindness demands it.
- ⁶ The dead can never recall you.

 Who can sing praise from the grave?
- I am wearied from groaning.
 I flood my pillow all night,
 soaking my couch with my tears.
- 8 My eyes are wasted with grief, dried up through all my distress.
- ⁹ But now begone, you bringers of pain! The Lord has heard my weeping;
- The Lord has heeded my crying; The Lord accepts my prayer.
- 11 Let all my tormentors be shamed and disgraced! May they leave in sudden dismay!

A shiggain for David which he sang to the Lord concerning the accusation of Cush the Benjaminite.

This psalm could well be titled a plea for justice. The Hebrew vacillates between the singular and the plural in referring to the adversary. For the sake of consistency we have carried the plural through the first stanza but, that the reader may not be ignorant of the nature of the Hebrew text, we have switched back to the singular in the second.

CANTOR

- ² O Lord, my God, in you I take refuge: save me! Deliver me from all my pursuers,
- ^a lest, like a lion, they tear me, dragging me off, helpless!
- ⁴ O Lord, my God, if I have done what they say, if my hands are guilty,
- ⁵ if I have mistreated my friend
 (I have saved many foes without gain), Selah
- "then let the enemy chase me, overtake me and trample my life to the ground, laying my pride in the dust!
- ⁷ Arise, O Lord, in your anger! Stand up to the wrath of my foes! Awake, my God, decree judgment!
- ⁸ An assembly of peoples surround you. Turn to them, now, from on high!
- ⁹ If The Lord can judge his people, then judge me, Lord, by my deeds, by my record, Most High.¹
- Let the evil of the wicked be avenged! Let the righteous prevail! Examine the heart and the mind,
- ¹¹ My Protector, O God, The Most High¹ The Savior of honest men!

CHOIR

- ¹² God is a righteous ruler, an avenging God at all times.
- ¹³ Unless he turn back, he will² whet his sword, he will string his bow and set it.
- 14 He will ready his deadly weapons and make his arrows hot.

CANTOR

- 15 See him who breeds evil, is pregnant with trouble and brings forth deception!
- ¹⁶ He dug and cleared out a cistern, then fell in the pit that he made.
- ¹⁷ His foul plan turns back on himself; on his own skull his trouble descends.

CHOIR

¹⁸ I will praise The Lord for his triumph! I will sing to The Lord, The Most High!³

PSALM 8

For the conclusion. Upon the gittith. A psalm for David.

This well-known hymn of praise is extremely difficult to translate in the first stanza. The Hebrew is unclear at one point only, but states so much in so few words that it is hard to produce an English translation that is economical in words. It is closely related to Genesis 1.

Choir

² Lord, our Master, how great is your name in the earth!¹ Your praise is cast through the sky!² ³ From the mouths of babes and infants you have called forth strength despite foes,⁸ silencing enemies and avengers.

CANTOR

⁴ When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,

the moon and the stars which you have created,

- why should you notice a human?
 Why should you make use of man?
- ⁶ You have made him almost like God and crowned him with glory and honor.
- ⁷ You gave him command of your works; you have placed it all at his feet
- 8—the sheep, the oxen, all of them, yes, even the beasts of the field,
- ⁹ the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea, swimming the paths of the ocean.

CHOIR

10 Lord, our Master, how great is your name in the earth!

PSALM 9

For the conclusion. Al-muth labben. A psalm for David.

This and Psalm 10, which together form one psalm in the ancient Greek versions, are partial acrostics. One suspects, in fact, that in an earlier version they may have been perfect acrostics and that a long history of usage altered the words and lines at points.

CANTOR

² I earnestly confess The Lord.

('aleph)

CHOIR

I will tell all your wondrous deeds;

³ I will celebrate you and rejoice;

I will sing to your name, O Highest.

CANTOR

- ⁴ When my enemies turned away (beth) they staggered and perished before you.
- ⁵ You upheld my cause and my case; you sat on your throne, judging with justice.

CHOIR

- ⁶ You rebuked nations, destroyed the wicked; (gimel) you removed their name forever.
- ⁷ The enemy is finished, permanently ruined, his cities uprooted
 —cities no longer remembered.

CANTOR

- ⁸ But The Lord is permanently seated, (he) securing his throne for judgment.
- ⁹ He judges the world with justice; he tries the peoples with fairness.

Choir

- ¹⁰ May The Lord be the refuge of the poor, (waw) a refuge for times of oppression!
- ¹¹ May those who know your name trust you, for you never forsake those who seek you!

CANTOR

- ¹² Sing to The Lord, O citizen of Zion! (zain)

 Make known to the peoples his deeds!
- ¹³ The Avenger of Blood has remembered the lowly; he has not forgotten their cry.¹

CHOIR

14 Pity me, O Lord! (heth)
See how my foes have hurt me.

Lift me out of death's gateway

that I may repeat all your praises
in the gates of the daughter² of Zion
and rejoice in your help.

CANTOR

- 16 The nations sink in the pit they have dug; (teth) their own feet are caught in the net they have hid.
- ¹⁷ It is known that The Lord works justice: by the deeds of their own hands the wicked are caught.
- 18 The wicked return to Deathland (yod)
 —all nations forgetful of God.

CHOIR

- ¹⁰ The poor are not always forgotten; (kaph) the hope of the lowly does not always perish.
- ²⁰ Arise, O Lord! Let man not prevail! Let the nations be judged in your presence!
- ²¹ Decree, Lord, a terror upon them that the nations may know they are men.

Selah.

PSALM 10

CANTOR

- ¹ Why, O Lord, do you stay far away (lamed) and hide when times are so trying,
- ² when the wicked molest the downtrodden, making them fall by their schemes?

- ³ For the wicked man boasts of the lusts of his brain, coveting a blessing but scorning The Lord, (nun)
- * saying in his pride, "'His wrath will not follow," thinking, "There is no God."

CHOIR

- ⁵ His ways seem ever to prosper; your justice goes over his head.
 - He spits in the face of his troubles
- ⁶ and says to himself, "I am safe." He never appears to be troubled.
- This mouth is a curse; it is full of deceit and violence. (samech)

 Under his tongue hide mischief and folly.

CANTOR

- * He lives in the alleys of town
 and murders the innocent in darkness,
 with eyes ever roving for victims. ('ain)
- He lurks and seizes the helpless.He catches the helpless in his trap.
- ¹⁰ The victim falls into his net, hopelessly felled by his strength.²
- "God does not care.

 He has hidden his face:
 he never shall see it."

CHOIR

¹² Arise, God!³ Lift up your hand! (qoph)
Forget not the helpless!

- ¹³ Why should the wicked man flaunt even God and think that you will not chase him?
- You are planning to take it in hand.⁴
 The victim, the orphan can lean upon you.
 Surely you will be their helper!
- ¹⁵ Break the grasp of the wicked, the bad man! (shin) Let his never-found guilt be discovered.

CANTOR

- 16 The Lord is King forever and ever.
 The nations perish from the earth.
- ¹⁷ You have heeded the hope of the humble, O Lord.

(tau)

You strengthen their heart; your ear pays attention,

18 giving justice to the orphan, the oppressed.

CHOIR

Let mortal man never again bring terror on earth.⁵

PSALM 11

For the conclusion. For David.

CANTOR

I have sought The Lord's shelter. Why do you seek my life?¹ Flee like a bird to your hilltop!

CHOIR

² Behold, now, the wicked: they are bending the bow; they have fitted the arrow to the string to shoot in the dark at the honest.

³ The pillars are destroyed.

What is The Righteous One doing?

CANTOR

In his holy house is The Lord, The Lord, whose throne is in heaven. His eyes are watching, his gaze is searching the human race.

⁵ The Lord, The Righteous, examines the wicked. He who loves trouble will hate his own life.

⁶ He showers the wicked with coals, with fire and brimstone.

A scorching wind shall be their dessert.

CHOIR

⁷ The Lord is just and loves what is right; he watches the honest with favor.

PSALM 12

For the conclusion. On the eighth (tone?). A psalm for David.

CANTOR I

² Bring help, O Lord, for the saints have perished! The faithful are gone

from the race of man.

³ Everyone lies when he speaks to his neighbor; they speak with two minds and lips that deceive.

CHOIR

⁴ May The Lord cut off every lip that deceives, every tongue that speaks great things, ⁵ every man who says, "With our tongues we are strong; our lips are with us: who is our master?"!

CANTOR II

6 "For the plight of the helpless, for the cry of the poor, I now will arise," says The Lord, "providing the safety they need."

CHOIR

- ⁷The words of The Lord are purified words refined in a furnace.¹ from ore that is seven times smelted.
- ⁸ May you guard us, O Lord and keep us from this age to ages unending,
- 9 for the wicked are prowling around, planning something vile for mankind.

For the conclusion. A Psalm for David.

This psalm epitomizes the "perfect" Hebrew prayer in that it contains in equal balance the three elements that make up such a prayer: the complaint (vss. 2-3), the plea (vss. 4-5), and the expression of trust or commitment (vss. 5-6).

- ² How long, O Lord? Will you always ignore me? How long will you hide your presence from me?
- ³ How long must I suffer these thoughts in my mind, this grief in my heart all the day?
- ⁴ How long must my foe be exalted above me?
- 4 Consider and answer me, Lord, my God! Enlighten my vision or else I shall die!
- 5 —or my enemy say, "I have conquered!" and my foe rejoice at my fall.
- ⁶ But I, I have trusted your kindness:

my heart shall rejoice in your help.

I will sing to the Lord!

The Most High has treated me well.¹

For the conclusion. For David.

there is none, not one.

This psalm is the same as Psalm 53 with only a few differences. This is to say, we have in the Psalter two versions of the same psalm. Both are textually corrupt and very difficult to translate at points.

CANTOR

The fool has said to himself, "There is no God." They destroy; they do what is foul.¹ There is none who does good.²

CHOIR

² The Lord looks down from the heavens on the off-spring of man to see if there may be a wise one, one who seeks God.
³ But all turn, corrupted, together.
There is none who does good;

(The Gk adds the following at this point:

Their throats are like opened tombs; their tongues speak deceit.³

With venom of snakes on their lips,⁴ their tongue is a curse full of poison.⁵

Their feet walk swiftly to bloodshed;⁶ their paths lead to plunder and spoil.

They know not the way of peace;

There is no fear of God among them.⁷)

CANTOR

⁴ Do those workers of evil who devour my people not know 28

They have eaten the bread of The Lord but call not on his name.

They will suffer great terror,9

6 for God abides with 10 the righteous.

The council of the poor will shame them, for The Lord is their refuge.

CHOIR

⁷ Oh that help for Israel would come out of Zion? When God removes the captivity of his people, Judah will rejoice, Israel be glad.¹¹

PSALM 15

A psalm for David.

This is a type of psalm used by the priests to state what is required of one who would bring an offering to God. Another example of the same type is Psalm 24:3-5. Psalm 26 is the worshipper's answer to this, as we can judge from the liturgical directions given in Deuteronomy 26.

CHOIR

Lord, who may dwell in your tent, reside in your holy hill?

CANTOR

² The trustworthy man, who does what is right

and thinks with an honest mind,

who has not been a slandering gossip,
who has not been bad to his neighbor,
who has not insulted his friends.

CHOIR

⁴ One vile in his eyes is rejected; he who fears The Lord is honored.¹

CANTOR

When he swears to do evil he does it;² he has loaned no money for interest nor been bribed to betray the innocent.

CHOIR

Whoever does these things shall never fail.

PSALM 16

A miktam for David.

This psalm was written by and designed for the use of one just converted to faith in Yahweh. Its language and ideas suggest an early date, perhaps the eighth century B.C. or hefore.

CANTOR

Guard me, O God, for I seek your protection! ² I say, "O Lord," you are my greatest good."²

- ³ The holy powers that were in the land are only your nobles.
 - I do not like them.3
- ⁴ They only bring troubles.
 In haste they regress.
 I will pour no libations of blood!
 I will not say their names with my lips!
- ⁵ You have measured my portion; it is you who sustain my allotment.
- ⁶ My boundaries fall in fine places; my inheritance pleases me well.⁴
- ⁷ I will bless The Lord for he guides me (by night my heart so instructs me).
- 8 I put The Lord always before me. He always will stay at my side.
- Therefore my heart is now glad; my pride is rejoicing.My body can live in safety,
- 10 for you will not leave me to die nor commit your saint to the grave.
- You will show me the pathway of life. Your favor means fulness of joy; your hand offers pleasures forever.

A psalm for David.

This psalm has proven to be exceedingly difficult to translate. Its archaic language stamps it as very old. It was necessary for us to re-plot the Hebrew lines in order to produce the translation we have here, and at one point (but only one!) we were

forced to delete a word on the grounds that it had been written into the text in the history of transmission.

Hear, O Lord, my defense! Give heed to my cry! Listen to my prayer! My lips speak in earnest.¹

- ² Let my judgment proceed from your favor! May your eyes take note of good deeds!
- ³ You examine my heart;
 you visit by night.
 You have tested and cannot find fault.
 It is not on my lips.
- As for deeds of man, by the word of your lips I have guarded myself from violent ways.
- My steps are controlled; my tracks do not stray from your pathways.
- "Now I call unto you as The God who responds.² O lend me your ear and hear what I say!
- ⁷ Show me your kindness by saving believers³ with strength from those who rise up!
- 8 O guard me with special care! Protect me, in the shade of your wings,
- 9 from the grasp of the wicked who destroy, from my foes who come round me to kill!

- ¹⁰ Polluted in heart, they close in, speaking proud words with their mouths.
- ¹¹ They advance and now they surround me, their eyes intent on destruction,⁴
- ¹² like a lion eager to tear, a young lion sitting in ambush.
- Confront him and bend him!
 Deliver my life from the wicked

 14 by the sword of your hand, O Lord
 Remove them from the earth!
 Cut them off from the living!
 And your treasure?
 May their stomachs be filled;
 may their sons be sated
 and leave what is left for their children.
- ¹⁵ I shall surely behold you in triumph and awaken with pleasure to see you.

For the conclusion. For the servant of The Lord, for David, who spoke the words of this song to The Lord when The Lord delivered him from the grasp of his foes, from the hand of Saul.

This psalm, which is almost duplicated in II Samuel 22, could well be titled "a warrior's hymn of thanksgiving." As has been shown by Cross and Freedman (Journal of Biblical Literature, 1953), it is very early. We rely on their work for our transla-

tion here. The "warrior" we refer to was very likely the king and, hence, this is a portion of royal liturgy.

CHOIR

² He said,

"I love you, O Lord, my strength,

"O Lord, my cliff,
my fort, my deliverer,
my rockbound retreat,
my shield, my salvation,

my celebrated fort.

² I call out, 'O Lord!'
and am saved from my foes."

CANTOR

- ⁵ The breakers of death came around me; torrents of evil overwhelmed me.
- "The ropes of Sheol³ enwrapped me and death traps were laid out before me.
- ⁷ In distress I cried, 'O Lord!'
 I called to my God,
 From his temple he heard my voice.
 My cry approached him;
 it entered his ears.
- * Then Earth trembled and shook; the roots of the mountains quivered. They trembled because he was angry.
- "Smoke arose from his nostrils, devouring fire from his mouth; hot coals glowed from his presence.
- ¹⁰ He parted the skies and descended, a storm cloud under his feet.

- ¹¹ He mounted a cherub and flew; he sped on the wings of the wind.
- ¹² He made the darkness his mantle; his tent, a water-filled cloud. Banks of thick clouds were before him.
- ¹³ Before him the billows rolled on with hail and bolts of lightning.
- ¹⁴ The Lord thundered from Heaven, The Most High, sounding his voice.
- 15 He forged and showered his arrows; he made many spears and dispersed them.
- the roots of the world laid bare, at your angry rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of your nostrils.
- ¹⁷ He reached from the heights and grabbed me, drawing me out of deep waters,
- 18 rescuing me from strong enemies, from my foes, who were mightier than I.
- 19 They attacked on my day of disaster, but The Lord became my support.
- ²⁰ He brought me to where it was safe; he freed me because he loved me,
- ²¹ rewarding me for my just cause, repaying me for my clean hands.
- ²² For I kept the ways of The Lord; I have not rejected my God.
- ²³ All his commands are before me; I do not put aside his decrees.
- ²⁴ I have been honest before him;

I have guarded myself from evil.

²⁵ He repaid me for my just cause, because I was innocent before him."⁵

CHOIR

- ²⁰ With the faithful man you are faithful; with the honest man you are honest;
- ²⁷ with the pure you show yourself pure, but with the perverse, deceptive.
- ²⁸ You are mighty; you save the lowly but cause proud eyes to look down.
- 20 It is you who gives light, O Lord, my lamp. My God illumines my darkness.
- ³⁰ With you I can crush a whole troop; with my God I can scale any wall.
- The word of The Lord is well tested.

 He is a shield to all who will trust him.

CANTOR

- "Who is God but The Lord? Who is a rock but our God?
- 33 It is God who girds me with strength, who grants that my ways are safe,
- who makes my feet like stags, who lets me stand on the heights,
- 35 who trains my hands for war, my arms for bending the bow.⁶
- You gave me your shield of victory. Your right arm sustained me; your triumph encouraged me.⁷

- ³⁷ You broadened my stride beneath me; my ankles did not give way.
- ³⁸ I chased my foes and I caught them; I continued until they were beaten.
- ³⁹ I destroyed them, never to rise; they fell beneath my feet.
- ⁴⁰ You clothed me with strength for battle, brought down my assailants beneath me.
- ⁴¹ You gave me the neck of my foes;⁸ I put my enemies to silence.
- ⁴² They cried, but there was no savior. Even The Lord did not help them.
- ⁴³ I ground them like dust on the pavement; I crushed them like dirt of the streets.
- 14 You saved me from strife of the people. You set me as head of the nations: an alien people now serve me.
- ⁴⁵ Foreigners cringe before me;⁹ as soon as they hear they obey me.
- 46 Foreigners collapse; trembling, they come from their bulwarks.
- ¹⁷ The Lord live! My rock be blessed! The God who helped me is high!
- ⁴⁸ —the God who granted me vengeance, who brought down the people beneath me,
- ⁴⁹ rescuing me from my foes.

You exalt me above my assailants. You save me from violent brutes.

For this, before nations I praise you; O Lord, to your name I sing hymns."

CHOIR

⁵¹ He increases the triumphs of his king. He faithfully favors his anointed, David, and his seed evermore.

PSALM 19

For the conclusion. A psalm for David.

There are actually two compositions here. The first is a hymn using common Near Eastern imagery to describe the role of the heavenly wonders, particularly the sun, in God's overall plan. The second is a hymn in praise of the totah or teaching of Yahweh. The theme of both is, of course, the revelation of God.

CHOIR I

- ² The heavens declare God's glory; the skies display his handiwork.
- ³ Each day pours forth a speech; each night proclaims some knowledge.
- ⁴ There is no speech, not a word, but what their voice is heard.
- ⁷ Their sound has gone out in the earth, their words to the edge of the world.
- ⁶ He set the sun's tent in the sea.¹
 Like a bridegroom it comes from its chamber, exulting like a warrior,
 sprinting on its pathway;

its entrance, the heaven's horizon, its finish, the farthest extreme.

Nothing is hid from its rays.

CHOIR II

8 The Lord's instructions are perfect, refreshing the spirit.

The decree of The Lord is trusty, instructing my brain.²
9 The laws of The Lord are right, delighting the mind,

The commands of The Lord are clear, enlightening the eyes.

10 The fear of The Lord is pure,

enduring forever.

The judgments of The Lord are reliable, prevailing together.

- 11 More precious than gold,
 than much fine gold!
 Sweeter than honey,
 than drippings of the comb!
 12 For by them your servant is taught;
 it is very rewarding to keep them.
 13 Who can find fault?
- O cleanse me from error!
- 14 Ah, keep your servant from scorn! Let it not overcome me. Then I shall be healthy and free of any great sin.

CHOIRS I and II

¹⁵ May the words of my mouth be pleasing and the thoughts of my mind be accepted,³ O Lord, my rock, my redeemer!

PSALM 20

For the conclusion. A psalm for David.

This psalm formed part of the elaborate set of liturgies that surrounded the figure and idea of the God-chosen king or messiah in Jerusalem.

CANTOR

- ² May The Lord give you triumph in time of distress!¹ May the name of the God of Jacob protect you!
- ³ May he send you help from the temple, support you from Zion!
- ⁴ May he note all your gifts, make the most of your offerings,
- ⁵ grant your desires, fulfill what you wish!

CHOIR

⁶ We sing of your help!
We celebrate the name of our God!

CANTOR

May The Lord grant all your petitions.

CHOIR

⁷ Now I know that The Lord helps his anointed. From his holy heavens comes triumph;¹

with powerful deeds he brings help.

- 8 Some trust chariots, some trust horses, but we find strength in The Lord's name.²
- ⁹ As for them—they collapse, they fall, but we stand erect and go on.
- ¹⁰ The Lord gives help to the king, responding whenever we call.

PSALM 21

For the conclusion. A psalm for David.

This, like the psalm which precedes, was used in the royal liturgy of the Davidic house in Jerusalem.

CANTOR

- ²O Lord, the king exults in your strength; he rejoices in your salvation.¹
- ³ You granted what he desired; you gave what his lips requested.

Selah

- ⁴ You greet him with blessings of goodness; you put a gold crown on his head.
- ⁵ He asked you for life and you gave it —long life, yes, days without end.
- ⁶ By your help his honor is great; you endow him with glorious splendor.
- ⁷ You give him blessings unnumbered and permit him to smile with great joy.
- 8 Therefore The King trusts The Lord; he is kept² by the kindness of The Highest.

CHOIR

- "May your hand find all of your foes, your arm seek out those who hate you.
- 1" May your face be a furnace of fire as your anger devours them, O Lord.3
- 11 Remove their offspring from Earth, their seed from the children of men.
- For they purposed evil against you; they made a plan, but in vain,
- 13 for you made them turn back; you aimed your bow at their faces.
- ¹⁴ Be exalted, O Lord, in your power! We shall chant and sing of your valor.

PSALM 22

For the conclusion. Upon Ayeleth Hashahar. A psalm for David.

This prayer is written in beautiful Hebrew but in a type of syntax which had made it very difficult to translate.

CANTOR

- ² My God, my God, O why have you left me? The words that I groan bring help no closer.
- My God, I call by day without answer, by night, and I still find no rest.

CHOIR

- ⁴ You are The Holy One, throned on the praises of Israel.
- ⁵ Our fathers believed in you;

they trusted and you set them free.

6 They cried unto you and you freed them; they hoped and were not disappointed.

CANTOR

- ⁷ But I?—a worm, not a man!
 —scorned and despised by mankind.
- s All who see me insult me, protruding their lips and wagging their heads.
- 9 "He trusts¹ The Lord. Will he save him? Let him help if he loves him!"
- You led me forth from the womb to rest at the breasts of my mother.
- ¹¹ I was cast upon you from birth —my God since my mother bore me.
- 12 Stay not far away for trouble is near and I have no helper!
- ¹³ Many wild oxen surround me; strong bulls of Bashan² gather round.
- 14 They open their jaws at me like a ravening, roaring lion.
- ¹⁵ I am emptied like water. All my bones are disjointed. My heart has become like wax, melting within my breast.
- My strength has dried up like a potsherd and my tongue is stuck to my palate. In the dust of death you have laid me.

- ¹⁷ Many wild dogs gather round me; a band of badmen encircle, piercing my hands and my feet.³
- In I can count every one of my bones.
 Ah, how they stare when they see me!
- 19 They divide my garments among them; they sit and cast lots for my clothes.
- 20 But you, O Lord, stay near!
 O my strength, hasten to help me!
- 21 Rescue my life from the sword, my head from the blade of the axe.4
- 22 Save me from the mouth of the Lion; make me conquer the horns of wild oxen.
- ²⁸ I proclaim your name to my brothers; in the midst of the gathering I praise you.
- 24 Praise him, O worshipper of The Lord! Honor him, all offspring of Jacob! Respect him, O seed of Israel!
- 25 For he does not despise nor reject the cry of the needy. He does not turn away his face; when he cries unto him he listens.
- I repeat my hymn in the great congregation.
 I pay my vows before those who worship.
- 27 The afflicted shall eat and be full.
 The Lord's disciples shall praise him.
- ²⁴ May their hearts live on!
 May all the ends of the earth take note and return to The Lord!

May all the tribes of the nations bow in worship before him!⁷

²⁹ For dominion belongs to The Lord; he rules the nations.

³⁰ To him⁸ they will bow when they sleep⁹ in the earth; they bend before him when they go to the dust.

May his soul live on¹⁰

31 and my seed adore him!

May they speak of the Lord¹¹ to the next generation.

May they tell of his triumph to the people unborn,¹²

for he has acted.¹³

PSALM 23

A psalm for David.

This familiar psalm is actually two prayers of trust. The first speaks in the imagery of shepherd and sheep. The second, in the imagery of host and guest.

My shepherd is The Lord: I lack nothing.

He lets me stretch out in green meadows; he takes me to well-watered places,

refreshing my spirit; he leads me along the right paths for the honor of his name.

Even when I walk in great danger I fear no harm, because you are with me.

Your club and your staff, they are my comfort.

⁵ You spread out the table before me in front of my foes.

You anoint my head with oil as my cup overflows.

"Yes, kindness and goodness pursue me all through my life.

I will dwell in the house of The Lord as long as I live.

PSALM 24

For David. A psalm.

This psalm is made up of liturgical responses which are appropriate to such a setting as that described in Deuteronomy 26. It no doubt had its beginning in a harvest festival but it also contains elements of royal liturgy.

CANTOR

The Lord owns the earth and its contents, the world and its creatures.

² On the waters primeval he built it; over the torrents he made it.

CHOIR

Who can climb The Lord's hill? Who can go up to his sanctuary?

CANTOR

⁴ The man with clean hands and an honest mind, who does not foolishly pledge his life nor take an oath in deceit.

⁵ He carries a blessing away from The Lord, vindication from the god who saves him.

CHOIR

⁶ Seek The Eternal One, You who search for the Presence of Jacob! Selah

CANTOR

⁷ Lift up your heads, O gates! Be raised, O ancient doors! The glorious King arrives.

CHOIR

* Who is this glorious King?

The Lord, the strong, the hero,

The Lord, the hero of war.

CANTOR

" Lift up your heads, O gates! Be raised, O ancient doors! The glorious King arrives.

CHOIR

Who is this glorious King? The Lord of armies, he is the glorious King.

PSALM 25

For David.

This is an imperfect acrostic. The lengths of lines vary. The qoph is never used in the acrostic scheme. In its place, the resh is used twice. Needless to say, this psalm does not repre-

sent the best in Hebrew poetry. It combines the elements of the prayer and the didactic poem.

'aleph I commit myself unto you, O Lord. ² I trust you, my God: beth let me not be ashamed. Let no foe exult over me. 3 Surely, none who look to you are disapgimel pointed; disappointment is for treacherous deceivers. daleth ⁴ Show me, O Lord, your pathways; teach me your ways. Lead me in faithfulness; teach me, he for you are the god who can help me. I am looking to you all the day. waw ⁶ Remember your mercy and kindness, O Lord. zain for they are eternal. ⁷ Forget, please, the sins of my youth, my heth rebellions, and remember me through your kindness, on the grounds of your goodness, O Lord! 8 The Lord is good and right. teth Therefore, he shows sinners the way. 9 He can lead the afflicted to justice; 10d he can teach the afflicted his way. 10 All The Lord's pathways are kind and dekaph pendable to the guardians of his covenant and testimonies. 11 For your own reputation, O Lord, lamed you forgive my guilt, which is great. 12 Who is the man who respects The Lord? mem May he teach him the way he has chosen!

nun	13 His life reposes in goodness;
	his descendants possess the earth.
samech	14 His worshippers know The Lord's
	friendship
	as he makes known his covenant to them.
'ain	15 My eyes are ever on The Lord:
	it is he who guides my feet out of danger.
pe	¹⁶ Turn, my God, and be gracious,
•	for I am alone and afflicted!
sade	¹⁷ The troubles of my mind have increased:
	take me out of my distress!
resh	18 Behold my affliction, my travail!
	Forgive all my sins!
resh	19 Behold how my enemies increase!
	With a violent hatred they hate me.
shin	20 Protect my life, deliver me!
	Do not disappoint me! I trust you.
tan	21 May honesty and uprightness guard me
	as I hope in you!
	22 Redeem Israel, O God, from all of her
	troubles!

PSALM 26

For David.

This psalm represents the worshippers' answer to such as Psalms 15 or 24:3-5. In Deuteronomy 26:13-15 we see this kind of prayer in a festival context. Verses 6-7 of the psalm betray its liturgical character. It was obviously accompanied by actions of an appropriate nature.

CANTOR

Judge me, O Lord:
I have walked in my integrity.
I can stand, for I trust the Lord.

- ² Try me, O Lord, examine me; test my mind and my heart.
- ^a I have guided my eyes by your kindness; I have traveled about in your truth.
- ⁴ I have not kept company with scoundrels; I will not mingle with criminals.
- ⁵ I hate the company of troublers; I will not sit down with the wicked.

CHOIR

 I am washing my hands in innocence as I circle the altar of The Lord
 to hear the voices of praise, to tell of your wonderful deeds.

CANTOR

- *O Lord, I love to dwell in your temple, the place where your glory abides.
- Do not group me with sinners, with men who worship idols,²
- whose hands have evil intentions, whose right hands hold forth a bribe.

CHOIR

- ¹¹ I continue in my integrity. Redeem me! Be gracious!
- ¹² My foot stands firm on this pavement; I will bless you in assemblies, O Lord.

PSALM 27

For David.

There are really two separate compositions here. The first (1858, 1-6) is in lovely and perfect Qinah meter, concluding with four long lines. The second (1858, 7-14) is written in much more irregular, though hardly less beautiful, style.

CANTOR

The Lord is my light and my savior: whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the strength of my life: whom shall I dread?

- When men of evil approach me to eat at my flesh,
 - it is they, my troublers and foes who stumble and fall.
- ³ If an army should gather against me my heart shall not fear;
 - if war should be waged against me, even then I can trust.
- 4 But one thing I ask from The Lord and for that I plead:
 - I would dwell in the house of The Lord as long as I live
 - to behold the mercy of The Lord. to pray¹ in his temple.
- ⁵ Let him hide me within his tent in the day of trouble
 - —conceal me inside his pavilion and exalt me in danger!
- ⁶ Even now may he lift up my head

above my gathering foes.

In his tent I will offer an offering of joy.

I will chant and sing praise to The Lord!

CHOIR I

Hear, O Lord, as I pray aloud!
 Have mercy! Respond!
 My heart has spoken for you:
 "Seek for my presence."

CHOIR II

Your presence, O Lord, I am seeking.

"Conceal me not from your presence!
Reject not your servant in anger,
for you are my help!
Do not leave nor forsake me,
O God, my salvation!

CHOIR I

When my father and mother forsake me, may The Lord take me in.

Teach me, O Lord, your way. Lead me in the path that is right despite my opponents.

¹² Abandon me not to my foes, for deceivers rise up to oppose me, breathing out violence.

What if I hoped not to see the goodness of The Lord in the land of the living?

Choir II

14 Trust in The Lord.

Stand fast and strengthen your courage. Yes, trust in The Lord.

PSALM 28

For David.

We suspect that there must have been some kind of interlude between vs. 5 and vs. 6—some assurance of answered prayer, for vs. 6 begins a response of praise. The words of vs. 8 make it evident that the solo parts were spoken on behalf of the king. Hence, this psalm belongs to the royal liturgies.

CANTOR I

I am calling to you, O Lord: my rock, do not pass me in silence, for if you are silent I will be as if lowered to the grave.

- ² O hear the sound of my prayer as I cry unto you, as I lift my hands to the holiest place!
- ³ Do not drag me off with the wicked, with those who do evil, who speak about peace with their neighbors while their minds think of trouble.
- *Repay them for their deeds, for the evil of their acts! Let them have what their hands devised! Return the reward they deserve.
- They do not understand The Lord's works nor the deeds of his hands.

Destroy them beyond rebuilding!

CANTOR II

Blessed be The Lord,
for he heard the sound of my prayer.
The Lord is my strength and my shield.
In him my heart trusts.
I was helped and my heart is exulting.
With my singing I praise him.

CHOIR

- * The Lord is his strength and his fort; he makes his anointed victorious.
- ⁹ Save your people! Bless your possession! Shepherd and lead them forever!

PSALM 29

A psalm for David.

This is one of the oldest psalms in the Psalter. So thoroughly Canaanitic is its style and vocabulary that we almost suspect it to be an old Baal hymn rewritten for the worship of Yahweh.

CHOIR I

Ascribe to The Lord,
you sons of the gods,
ascribe to The Lord
honor and strength!

Ascribe to The Lord
the glory of his name!
Worship The Lord
when his holiness appears!

CHOIR II

- ³ The Lord's voice is over the water; the majestic God is thundering, The Lord over waters primeval.
- ⁴That powerful voice, that marvelous voice:
- ⁵ The Lord's voice cracking the cedars.

CHOIR I

The Lord is cracking the cedars of Lebanon.

- ⁶ He makes Lebanon prance like a calf, Sirion, like a wild young bull.
- ⁷ The voice of The Lord splits fingers of fire.²

CHOIR II

's The voice of the Lord is stirring the desert; The Lord is stirring the desert of Qadesh.3 The voice of the Lord is whirling the oaks and wrecking4 the forest.

CHOIR I

In his temple his glory is seen.⁵
The Lord sits over the flood, enthroned as king forever.

CHOIR II

May The Lord give strength to his people! May The Lord bless his people with peace!

PSALM 30

A psalm. A song for the dedication of the temple. For David,

If the superscription is correct, this was written for the dedication of the second temple in 515 w.c. Dare we believe it? The text fits the occasion.

CANTOR

- ² I exalt you, Lord, for you saved me; you have not let my foes rejoice.
- O Lord, my God,I cried unto you and you healed me.
- ⁴O Lord, you lifted my life from Deathland; you revived me when I was dying.

CHOIR

- ⁵ Sing to The Lord, all you saints!

 Commemorate his holiness with praise!
- A moment of his anger:
 a lifetime of grace.
 We go to bed weeping but waken with joy.

CANTOR

- ⁷ As for me, I had said in my ease, "I shall never be moved."
- * Lord, in your pleasure you made me² a mountain of strength.
 But you hid your face
 and I was dismayed
- Then I called unto you, O Lord; to The Master I prayed.

"What good is my end, my descent to the grave?
Can the dust give praise or tell of your kindness?
Hear, O Lord, and have mercy!
O Lord, become now my savior!"

CANTOR AND CHOIR

- You turned my wailing to dancing; you took off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness.
- 13 Therefore my heart is now singing; it cannot be silent.
 - O Lord, my God, I will praise you forever!

PSALM 31

For the conclusion. A psalm for David.

- ² I trust you, O Lord: put an end to my shame! In your justice release me,
- ³ O lend me your ear! Come quickly to rescue!
 - O be my defense
 - —a fortified home for my safety,
- for you are my rock and my stronghold!

 For your own reputation lead me and guide me.
- Free me from the net they have hidden for me. You are my defense:
- " I commit my life to your keeping.

You have purchased my freedom, O Lord, dependable God.

- ⁷I despise those who keep silly idols; hence, I will trust in The Lord.
- * I will sing and be glad for your kindness! You, who have seen my affliction and have known every stress of my being,
- 9 you have not let the enemy take me; you have planted my feet on safe ground.
- ¹⁰ Have mercy, O Lord: I am troubled. My eyes are wasted with grief my mind, my whole system!
- My life has but vanished for sorrow, my years for sighing.My strength has failed for affliction; my bones are worn out.
- 12 My foes have made me disgraceful,
 a curse to my neighbors,
 a shock to my friends.
 When they see me in public they run and hide.
- ¹³ I am ignored as though dead, treated like a broken pot.
- ¹⁴ I have heard the many bad rumors, the fears that circulate as they counsel together against me. They have plotted to take my life.
- ¹⁵ But I? I rely upon you, Lord. I say, "You are my God."

- 16 You hold my fate, so save me from the grasp of my foes and pursuers.
- ¹⁷Let your smile beam down on your servant! In your kindness please help me!
- ¹⁸ Lord, let me not be ashamed that I called you! Let the wicked be ashamed; let them sneak to the grave.
- 19 May the lips that told lies be silenced —the lips which insulted the righteous with pride and contempt!
- 20 How great, O Lord, is the goodness you have treasured for those who fear you, what you have done for your followers before all mankind!
- ²¹ In your intimate presence you hid them from the turmoils of men, concealed under cover from those who accuse.
- ²² Blessed be The Lord! His kindness did wonders for me in a time¹ of distress.
- When I was frightened I said,"I perish before your eyes!"But you listened to the sound of my plea when I cried out to you.
- ²⁴ Adore The Lord, all his saints, for The Lord protects the faithful!

 Yet he pays in full the ones who act proudly.
- ²⁵ Be strong and encourage yourselves, all you who wait for The Lord!

PSALM 32

For David. A markil.

CHOIR

Happy is he whose guilt is removed, whose sin is forgiven!

² Happy the man to whom The Lord reckons no evil,¹ whose spirit is free from guile!

CANTOR

- ^a When I held back my very bones ached as I groaned through the day,
- ¹ Day and night, O Most High² your hand pressed down;

I became, O Almighty, as hot as the summer.3

5 Then I told you my sin;

I hid not my guilt.

I said, "I confess, O Most High," my transgressions, O Lord."

As for you, you removed the guilt of my sin.

CHOIR

"Therefore every saint prays unto you.

When an army approaches⁴ or flood waters rise, he is not overtaken.

⁷ You are my refuge.

You protect me from danger; you surround me with shouts of triumph.

CANTOR

* I will show you and teach you the way you should walk; I will fasten my eyes upon you.

Be not like a horse, like an ignorant mule—to be held with bridle and bit
or it will not come near you.⁵

CHOIR

- ⁹ Many are the pains of the wicked, but kindness surrounds him who trusts in The Lord.
- ¹⁰ Be glad in The Lord! Rejoice, you righteous! Sing, all you honest of heart!

PSALM 33

We can suggest two kinds of antiphonal reading for this psalm. In addition to the guides in the margin we would suggest a reading which uses every other line as a response. This means that the cantor would read verse 1a and the choir 1b, the cantor, 2a and the choir. 2b, etc.

CANTOR

- ¹ Rejoice in The Lord, you righteous! A hymn by the upright is lovely.
- ² Give praise to The Lord with a harp; make music to him with a lyre.
- ³ Sing him a song that is new: play it well on a brilliant horn!
- ⁴ For the word of The Lord does not err and all he has done stands true.
- ⁵ He loves what is just and right and the earth is full of his kindness.¹
- "By his word the heavens were made;1 by the breath of his mouth all its stars.2
- ⁷ It is he who scooped up the sea's waters,

- who put the great deep into basins.
- 8 Let all the earth worship The Lord!

 Let all the world's citizens fear!3
- ⁿ He spoke and things came into being; he gave the command and they stayed.

CHOIR

- ¹⁰ The Lord thwarts the will of the nations; he hinders the plan of the peoples,
- but his own4 will endures forever; the plans of his mind affect ages.
- ¹² How happy the nation whose god is The Lord, the people he chose as his own!

CANTOR

- 13 The Lord looks down from the heavens; he sees the sons of mankind.
- 14 From the place where he sits he looks out over all the inhabitants of Earth.
- 15 The Creator looks into their minds.⁵ he who observes all they do.
- 10 The king is not saved by great armies nor the hero spared by great strength.
- ¹⁷ The horse is a vain hope for victory: with all of its might it fails.
- 18 The Lord's eye is on those who fear him, who hope in his kindness,
- ¹⁰ to deliver their lives from death, to revive them in famine.

CHOIR

Our whole being waits for The Lord, for he is our help and our shield.

- ²¹ In him our hearts can be happy as we trust in his holy name.
- ²² O Lord, send your kindness upon us, inasmuch as our hope is in you.

PSALM 34

For David, when he feigned madness in front of Abimelech and left when he drove him out.

CANTOR

'aleph 2 I will bless you, O Lord, at all times;

CHOIR

in my mouth there is always a hymn.

CANTOR

beth 3 My whole being boasts of The Lord:

CHOIR

let the lowly folk hear and be glad.

CANTOR

gimel 4 Extol The Lord, now, with me!

CHOIR

Let us laud his name together!

CANTOR

daleth 5 I sought The Lord and he answered;

CHOIR

he saved me from all my foes.

CANTOR

he 6 Look unto him and be radiant!

CHOIR

Let not your face be downcast!

CANTOR

zain ⁷ This poor man called and The Lord heard;

CHOIR

he saved him from all of his troubles.

CANTOR

heth

⁸ The angel of The Lord encamps

CHOIR

around those who fear him to save them.

Cantor

teth Taste, and discover The Lord's goodness!

CHOIR

Happy is the man who will trust him.

CANTOR

yod

10 Fear The Lord, O you saints:

CHOIR

there is no want for those who fear him.

CANTOR

kaph 1

11 The rich1 may starve and go hungry,

Choir

but those who seek God² will suffer no need.

CANTOR

lamed 12 Come, O you sons, and hear me!

CHOIR

I will teach you the fear of The Lord.

CANTOR

mem

18 Who is the man who loves life

CHOIR

and wants to enjoy years of pleasure?

CANTOR

nun 14 Let him guard his tongue from evil,3 Choir

his lips from speaking deceit.

CANTOR

samech 15 Turn from evil to good!

CHOIR

Seek for peace and pursue it!

CANTOR

ain 16 The Lord's eyes watch the righteous;

CHOIR

his ears are turned to their cry.

CANTOR

pe 17 His face is against the wicked Choir

to abolish their memory from Earth.

CANTOR

sade 18 When the righteous4 cry The Lord hears

and saves them from all of their troubles.

CANTOR

goph 19 The Lord is near the downhearted;

CHOIR

he saves those whose spirit is crushed.

CANTOR

resh 20 Many are the troubles of the righteous Choir

but The Lord helps him out of them all.

CANTOR

shin 21 He cares for all of his bones:

CHOIR

not even one shall be broken.

CANTOR

tau 22 Evil shall slay the wicked;

Choir

the foes of the righteous are punished.

The Lord redeems the life of his servants; those who trust him will not be punished.

PSALM 35

For David.

Contend with my accusers, O Lord! Fight those who fight me! ² Take hold of armor and shield

- and rise to my aid! 3 Take out a lance and close in
- to meet my pursuers! Say to my heart, "I am your savior."!

- ⁴ Shame and discourage those who would kill me! Turn back in retreat and disgrace those who would hurt me!
- 5 May they be like chaff in the wind ---pushed by an angel of The Lord!1
- ⁶ May their way be dark and slippery, with an angel of The Lord in pursuit!
- ⁷ They secretly hid their trap, secretly sought for my life.2
- * May sudden³ misfortune find them! May the net which they hid ensnare them! May it destroy them!4
- " So my soul shall rejoice in The Lord, shall exult in his help.
- 10 All of my being shall say,
 - "O Lord, who is like you?
 - —delivering the weak from the strong, the poor from his despoilers!"

- Malicious accusers rise up and question of things I know not.⁵
- ¹² They repay me with evil for good. My life is a grief!⁶
- ¹³ Yet I, when they were sick, went in sackcloth; I punished myself and fasted with a prayer in my bosom for healing⁷
- 14 as for a friend or a brother.8 I acted like a mother in mourning, grieved and bowed down.
- 15 Yet when I fell they gathered in glee; they gathered against me. Attackers I knew not, they slandered unceasingly.
- ¹⁶ Like a circle of loudmouthed mockers they ground their teeth against me.
- ¹⁷ O Master, how long will you look? Rescue my life from their ravages, my precious life from the lions!
- ¹⁸ I will thank you in great assemblies; among large crowds I will praise you.
- 19 Let not my fool foes grin in triumph!
 Those who hate without cause wink their eyes.
- They do not speak words that are healthy, but devise words of deceit against those at rest in the land.9
- They hang their mouths open before me and say, "Aha! Aha! What we have seen!"

- 22 You have seen it, O Lord: be not silent!
 O Master, do not go far from me!
- ²³ Awake! Be alert to my cause!
 - -O Master, My God, to my case!
- ²⁴ Judge me with your justice, Lord! O my God, let them not grin in triumph!
- ²⁵ Let them not say to themselves, "Aha! What we want!"

Let them not say, "We have swallowed him."

- ²⁶ Let those who rejoice at my trouble be shamed and discouraged together! Clothe them who boast against me with shame and dishonor!
- ²⁷ But may those who want me vindicated sing and be glad!

May they say evermore,

"The Lord overcomes! He delights in the health of his servants."

²⁸ So my tongue shall speak of your victory, all day of your praise.

PSALM 36

For the conclusion. For the Servant of The Lord, for David.

CANTOR

- ² A rebellious voice speaks in the sinner's mind:¹ there is no fear of God to guide him.
- ³ He flatters himself by supposing² he can find his own sin and despise it.
- 4 His words are perverse and untrue;

he has ceased to act wisely or rightly.

He plans perverse things in his bed;

he chooses a course that is bad; he does not reject evil.

CHOIR

- ⁶ Your kindness, O Lord, reaches Heaven; your faithfulness touches the clouds.
- ⁷ Your standard is like mighty mountains; your justice is deep as the sea.

 He cares for both human and beast:
- 8 O Lord, your kindness is precious! Creatures both human and divine take refuge in the shade of your wing.
- ⁹ They feast on the fat of your temple and drink³ from your river of pleasures,
- for you own the fountain of life and by your light we see what is light.

CANTOR

- 11 Continue to be kind to your friends —to vindicate those who are honest!
- ¹² Let not arrogance approach me nor wickedness cause me to budge! There is where evil men fall,⁴ thrust down, never to rise.

PSALM 37

Here we have one of the earlier acrostics. Compared to such polished masterpieces as 34 or 119 it appears a bit crude. It is

not a "tight" acrostic: only the first of approximately every four lines must begin with a letter of the alphabet in its successive order. Onite interestingly, the writer was unable to begin a line with 'ain. Instead, he chooses a word combination (I'wlm) in which it is the second rather than the first letter.

'aelph ¹Do not fret over those who do evil nor worry because they do wrong, ² for like grass they shall suddenly wither; like the greenness of grass they shall fade. ³ Trust in The Lord and do good; beth enjoy the earth in security.1 ⁴Take delight in The Lord: he will give what your heart desires. ⁵ Commit² your way to The Lord; gimel trust him, for he is active. ⁶ He will make justice come like the dawn like noon daylight, your justification. daleth ⁷Be resigned to wait for The Lord. Do not fret over those who prosper, at the man who does things that are crafty. he * Refrain from anger and wrath; do not fret to the point of doing harm. ⁹ Evildoers will be cut off while his faithful^a possess the earth. 10 Soon the wicked shall vanish;

10/110

zain

you may search where they were: they are gone.

11 But the humble shall own the land and enjoy prosperity of peace.

¹² The bad man schemes at the righteous, grinding his teeth against him,

⁸¹ but The Lord only laughs at him, for he sees that his day is coming.

PSALMS 1-41 ¹⁴ The wicked have drawn the sword; they heth have bent their bow to strike the afflicted. to slay the honest. 15 But their sword shall pierce their own heart: their bows shall be broken. teth ¹⁶ Better is the poverty of the righteous than the wealth of so many who are wicked.

17 for the strength of the wicked shall break, while The Lord supports the righteous

18 The Lord knows the days of the innocent; rod their heritage will go on forever.

19 They will not be dismayed in bad times; when famine comes they shall eat.

kaph ²⁰ But the wicked shall perish. The foes of The Lord have the spendor of pastures:4 they vanish; like smoke they vanish.

²¹ The wicked repays not his loans lamed but the righteous is generous and gives.

²² His blessed ones own the land but those whom he curses die off.

²³ The Lord grants the steps of a man: mem he made him and delights in his way. ²⁴ When he trips he is not cast down,

for The Lord supports his hand.

²⁵ I was young and now I am old nun but have not seen the righteous forsaken nor his children go begging for bread.

²⁶ He can always be generous and lending while his children have plenty.

samech ²⁷ Turn from evil to good and enjoy a long life!

²⁸ The Lord is a lover of justice: he does not forsake his saints.

'ain 20 They shall always be guarded while the seed of the wicked is cut off.

The righteous shall have the land; they shall always be living upon it.

pe and The righteous man's mouth utters wisdom; his tongue speaks of justice.

³¹ With the law of his God in his heart his steps do not waver.

sade ⁸² The wicked man watches the righteous, desiring to kill him,

ⁿⁿ but The Lord keeps him out of his hand; when judged he is not condemned.

qoph
 A Trust in The Lord and hold fast to his way!
 He will raise you to owning the land:
 you shall see the fall of the wicked.

resh ³⁶ I have seen the bad man in his strength spreading out like a green, growing cedar.⁸ ⁸⁶ Then he passed away and was gone

Though I looked, he was not to be found.

shin at Stay pure! Behold the good man, for that man's reward is success.

³⁸ The rebels are entirely destroyed; the reward of the wicked, cut off.

tan 30 The Lord has help for the righteous; in troubled times he is their refuge.

⁴⁰ The Lord gives them help; he delivers them from the wicked.⁷ He saves them, for they trust him.

A psalm for David. For commemoration.

- ² O Lord, do not, in your anger, rebuke be! Do not, in your fury, punish me!
- ³ Your arrows have pierced me; your hand has pressed me.
- ⁴ My flesh becomes weak in the face of your wrath; my bones lose strength in the face of my sin.
- My guilt has surpassed my stature like a heavy burden, too heavy to bear.
- ⁶ My wounds are infected and festering because of my folly.
- ⁷ I am humbled—bent to my limit; I constantly walk in the dark.
- 8 My thighs are filled with burning; my muscles have no strength.
- ⁹ I am numbed; I am crushed to the limit. I roar in my anguish of mind.
- ¹⁰ O Master, my needs lie before you; my grief is not hidden from you.
- ¹¹ I feel that my strength is all gone; the luster is gone from my eyes.
- ¹² My friends and companions stand aloof from my plague;

my kinfolk refuse to come near.

¹³ They set traps, seeking my life, those pursuers of evil!¹

They speak of destruction and treachery; they continually mutter.

- ¹⁴ But I will play deaf and not listen like the mute, not opening my mouth.
- ¹⁵ Ah yes, like a man who hears nothing, whose mouth is not able to answer!
- ¹⁰ For you, O Lord, I will wait; you will answer, O Master, my God.
- ¹⁷ I say, "Lest they mock me with glee and boast over me when my foot has slipped."
- Ah me, I am ready to stumble; by pain is constantly with me.
- ¹⁰ I confess my guilt; I am sorry for my sin,
- ²⁰ but the foes of my life are mighty; those who wrongfully hate me increase.
- 24 Returning evil for good, they oppose the seeking of goodness.

(At this point the Gk adds this line: They rejected me, the beloved, like a loathsome corpse.)

- ²² Lord, do not leave me! O my God, do not go away!
- ^{2a} Hasten to aid me, my master, my help!

PSALM 39

For the conclusion, For Yeduthun, A psalm for David.

CANTOR

² I said, "I will hold to your ways to keep sin from my tongue; I will muzzle my mouth when wickedness is present."

³ I was silent; I was dumb.
I refrained from good things.

But my tension disturbed me.

⁴ The fire in my mind, which burned in my sighing, caused me to speak.

CHOIR

Show me, O Lord, my end. How many days have I left? I desire to know how I fare.

⁶ Lo, you have given but a handbreadth of days: my lifespan is nothing before you. Surely, every man stands as a breath;

⁷ each one walks about like a shadow.

Ah vanity! They heap up some wealth, knowing not who will get it. Selah

CANTOR

- 8 But now, Lord, for what have I waited? My hope? It is you.
- Deliver me from all my transgressions! Grant me not the reproach of a fool!
- ¹⁰ I am silent: I will not use my mouth. It is you who have done it.
- ¹¹Remove your plague from me!

 The hostility of your touch wears me out.

12 By rebuking iniquityyou punish a man;like a moth you consume what is precious.Surely everyone is but a breath!

Selah

CHOIR

Listen to my prayer, O Lord!
Give ear to my cry!
Do not be deaf to my weeping.
I am only your guest,
a pilgrim like all of my fathers.
Desist, that I may know gladness before I pass on and am gone!

PSALM 40

For the conclusion. For David. A psalm.

- ² I patiently waited for The Lord and he turned and listened to my cry.
- He lifted me out of death's pit, from the mire of the mud.
 He planted my feet on a rock, anchoring my steps.
- ⁴ He put a new song in my mouth: a hymn to our God.

Many shall view it with awe and trust in The Lord.

⁵ Happy is the fellow who puts his trust in The Lord, who does not turn for help to the proud, to tangles of lies!

- ⁶ As for you, you have done mighty deeds, O Lord, O my God, great wonders! And the plans you have for us:¹ no one can match you! Let me tell them, proclaim them! They are far beyond number.
- ⁷ You want no offerings or sacrifice, so you cause me to listen.² You ask no burnt flesh or atonement.
- 8 So I say, "Here I come: in the scroll it is written for me."3
- ⁹ I desire, my God, to do what you want: your teachings are in me.
- ¹⁰ I correctly confessed in the great assembly; lo, I restrained not my lips and you, O Lord, know it.
- ¹¹ I did not keep your triumphs to myself; I proclaimed you as savior and faithful.⁴ I have not concealed your kindness nor your truth from the great assembly.⁵
- ¹² And you, Lord, restrain not yourself from having mercy on me. May your kindness and truth⁶ continually guard me!
- ¹³ Dangers gather around me to a point beyond number; my sins have increased beyond comprehension.⁷ They outnumber the hairs of my head. My courage has left me.

- ¹⁴ Hurry, O Lord, to deliver me! O Lord, hasten to help me!
- ¹⁵ May those who are seeking to kill mebe thoroughly shamed and dismayed!May those who wish to do evil retreat in disgrace!
- ¹⁰ May those who say, "Aha! Aha!" be appalled because of dishonor!
- But let those who seek you
 rejoice and be glad!
 May those who love your saving deeds
 evermore say, "The Lord is great!"
- ¹⁸ I am needy and poor.
 May The Master consider me!
 You are my help, my deliverer.
 My God, do not tarry!

PSALM 41

For the conclusion. A psalm for David.

This psalm has proven to be very difficult to translate. The kinds of textual corruption indicate an old text which passed out of usage for some time.

CANTOR

2 Happy is he who considers the poor: in a day of distress The Lord saves him.

CHOIR

May The Lord guard and sustain him, give him joy in the land!²
May he not let his foes overcome!⁸ ⁴ May The Lord give him strength on his sickbed! To his bed you have sent him in illness.⁴

CANTOR

- ⁵ I say, "O Lord, pity me!
 - I have sinned against you, so heal me!"
- ⁶ My foes say bad things about me ("When will he die that his name may perish?").
- TWhen anyone comes to see me he dreams up a lie.5 Gathering gossip for himself, he goes out in public and tells it.
- 8 All those who hate me whisper together against me.
- ⁹ They spew out a foul message for me:
 "When he lies down may he nevermore rise!"
- ¹⁰ Even my good friend, a man whom I trusted, has thoroughly betrayed me.
- ¹¹ But you, O Lord, have compassion and lift me! Let me repay them!
- ¹² By this I will know that you like me: when my foes no longer insult me.⁶
- ¹³ As for me, you have kept me in safety and permanently set me before you.

CHOIR

¹³ Blessed be The Lord, the God of Israel, from of old to the future! Amen! Amen!

NOTES

Abbreviations Used in the Notes

Dahood, ANB *Psalms-1*, Introduction, Translation and Notes by Mitchell Dahood. ("The Anchor Bible.") Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966. A second volume, *Psalms 11* by Dahood has been published in 1968, *Psalms 111* is yet to be published.

Gk Septuaginta. Edited by Alfred Rahlfs. 2 vols. Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1952. This is the Greek version of the Old Testament from Alexandria.

Heb Biblia Hebraica. Edited by Rudolf Kittel. Stuttgart:
Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1954. This is the
Masoretic text of the Hebrew Old Testament.

Syr Any of the Syriac versions available; our source has been chiefly the critical apparatus of Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*

Targ Any of the Targum texts available; our source has been chiefly the critical apparatus of Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*.

The Psalms Scroll of Qumran Cave 11. Edited by J. A. Sanders. ("Discoveries in the Judaean Desert of Jordan," Vol. LV.) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965.

NOTES TO PSALMS 1-41

PSALM 2

- We have chosen to follow Dahood in ANB here. His argument is convincing.
- 2. The Heb is slightly obscure in part of this line.
- 3. The Gk has "shepherd them."
- 4. "O mortals" is after Dahood in ANB. We find his argument a bit less than convincing, but certainly the best suggestion to date.

PSALM 3

1. We follow Dahood's suggestion here.

PSALM 4

- With Dahood, we take hiphlah as an alternative spelling of hiphla'. The word means "do wonders" but we chose "rescue" for metrical reasons.
- We would also seriously consider Dahood's translation in ANB: "The light of your face has fled from us."

PSALM 5

- We take these two lines to be alternates and would recommend the omission of one in the reading of the psalm. This occurs occasionally when two versions of a psalm are brought together.
- 2. We omit bqr the second time for poetic rather than textual reasons, though there are grounds for the latter as well.
- 3. We follow Dahood in translating dmym as "idols."
- The Heb has only one metrical beat here. We translate with two in order to capture the full meaning of the Hebrew word.
- 5. In translating this double line we have deleted the second occurrence of bk and have partially switched the order of the lines for translation purposes only.

PSALM 7

The combination ktmy 'th has been a puzzle for a long time.
We have followed Dahood in taking 'ty as a name for God.

- We take welū plus the perfect form of the verb as an efuture.
- 3. We omit "the name of" before "The Lord" for metrical

- 1. We omit "all" for metrical reasons.
- The Hebrew is a bit obscure in this line. Dahood's tra ("I will adore your majesty above the heavens") is bas brilliant insight. We would recommend it as an alterna
- The "foe," the "enemy," the "avenger" are no doubt re to the chaotic powers which, according to ancient cos God had to overpower in creation.

PSALM 9

- 1. The word order has been altered for translation purpos
- 2. One could also read this as "house."

PSALM 10

- 1. Literally, "the wicked in his pride."
- 2. The last portion of vss. 9-10 is somewhat corrupt in t We amend the text slightly to get this translation.
- We delete yhwh on the grounds that it is only an alterr 'lhym in the text.
- 4. The Heb is somewhat unclear here.
- 5. The Heb is somewhat unclear here and perhaps partially

PSALM 11

1. Here, as in Psalm 29:9, we read 'mr as "see, look."

PSALM 12

 The meaning of 'lyl is uncertain. In Ugaritic (2 AQHT it seems to mean something like cane field or some are shafts for arrows or spears might be procured. We ha guessed at a meaning. Dahood emends the word to get "c in ANB.

PSALM 13

 We are forced to add one beat to this final line in c fully capture its meaning. As in other places, we follow in our rendering of 'ly.

PSALM 14

- 1. Psalms 14 and 53 have different terms here. We have chosen a translation which encompasses the meaning of both.
- One could have continued the quotation of the words of "the fool" to this point.
- 3. Compare Psalm 5:10.
- 4. Compare Psalm 140:3.
- 5. Compare Psalm 10:7.
- 6. Compare Isaiah 59:7-8.
- 7. "Among them" is literally, "in their eyes."
- 8. We change the word order here only to get a smoother and clearer translation.
- 9. The meaning of this line is somewhat uncertain. We can only be sure that it has something to do with the idea of terror.
- 10. Literally, "is in the assembly of."
- 11. The line is not this long in the Heb. We lengthen it only to capture its full meaning.

PSALM 15

- 1. We suggest that the psalm originally ended here and that the rest of the lines were added at two different stages: vs. 4 to make the requirements more complete, and the last line of the psalm as a didactic moralism from a time long after the psalm's original liturgical usage. In line with this interpretation we read ykbd as a niph'al rather than a pi'el form.
- Compare the story of Jephthah in Judges 11 to discover the meaning of this line.

- 1. We regard 'dny as a gloss of a late date. We take the lamed to be a vocative particle, as it is in some Ugaritic texts.
- 2. That is, "you are my benefactor." Literally we read, "You are my good; (there is) none above you."
- 3. The Heb is corrupt and unclear through four lines here. "The holy powers" are presumably the native nature-deities of Canaan. We emend the rest of this section of text by changing kl so that the k becomes the suffix ("your") for the word preceding it and then change the lamed to read lô' ("not").
- 4. Part of being converted to faith in the god of the Hebrews was to receive an allotment of Hebrew tribal land, if we read this psalm correctly.

- 1. Literally, "from lips without guile."
- 2. Literally, "for you answer me, God."
- 3. Literally, "O savior of believers."
- 4. Literally, "their eyes intent on pressing to the ground."
- 5. This is the one point where we are forced to emend the text in order to get meaning (we delete the first occurrence of mmtym). As it is, our translation is somewhat uncertain. "Remove" is a free rendering for "kill" or "put to death." One could possibly have proceeded from a translation like this:

Deliver my life, from the wicked your sword, your hand from mere mortals.

PSALM 18

- 1. Literally, "horn of my salvation."
- 2. Reading msgby and mhll as a phrase together.
- Elsewhere we translate this as "Deathland." Here we use Sheol (pronounced sh*-ōl) in order to keep the line shorter and for more pleasing combinations of sound.
- 4. A reference to lightning. Storm imagery prevails here.
- 5. In the light of vs. 21 we suspect these two lines to be secondary.
- 6. One could also read, "my arms for a bow of bronze."
- 7. We are indebted to Dahood in ANB for the meaning of 'nurth'. We change the person of the verb to get brevity in translation.
- 8. A common signification of triumph in the ancient Near East.
- 9. We follow the text of II Samuel 23 in this yerse.

PSALM 19

- We change bhm to bym. Indeed, the he and the yod had sufficient similarity in form during the paleo-Hebrew era as to make this a possible source of error more often. The sea referred to is the Mediterranean, which lies to the west of Palestine.
- 2. We are indebted to Dahood for "my brain."
- 3. "Be accepted" reads literally, "for your presence."

PSALM 20

 Here, as in Psalm 18:36, we accept Dahood's rendering of the root 'nh, though "respond" would make good sense as well.
 We change the person of the verb for translation purposes only.

 We take 'lhynw and yhwh to be alternates in the text as a result of conflation. "Get strength" derives from the root zkr, which designates manliness.

PSALM 21

- 1. We omit m'd for metrical reasons only.
- 2. Literally, "he is not moved,"
- 3. We have emended the text radically to get this translation. Another possibility would have been the following:

May you make them a furnace of fire in the day of your presence, O Lord! In your anger devour them; eat them with fire.

PSALM 22

- 1. The Hebrew term is somewhat uncertain here. Dahood suggests "live" but lacks convincing evidence for support.
- 2. The accent is on the last syllable (ha-shań).
- 3. We follow the Gk, Syr, and Jerome, mostly because the metaphor is bad in the Heh.
- 4. We like Dahood's brilliant suggestion here and follow it in "blade of the axe." We are not quite as convinced by his discussion of yhyd and present our translation mostly as a fitting parallel for nps.
- Dahood's suggestion for m'tk, though it lacks sufficient documentation, is the best solution suggested to date, considering the rules of parallelism. We adopt it.
- 6. We follow the Gk. Heb reads "your."
- 7. We reverse the order of the Hebrew lines in both cases for translation purposes only.
- 8. We read 'klw as 'k lw.
- 9. We emend kl dšny to k yšny.
- 10. Reading lw instead of l'. We feel uncomfortable with this line.
- 11. We translate 'dny as "The Lord" for metrical reasons only.
- 12. More correctly, "yet to be born." The Heb, however, is unclear and perhaps corrupt.
- 13. The Heb is unclear and perhaps corrupt.

- 1. Literally, "dwelling place of."
- As at other points, we follow Dahood's understanding of 'nšy dmym.

- 1. Or, with Dahood, "awake" or "greet the morn."
- 2. The Heb is corrupt in these two lines. We regard our translation as tentative and uncertain.
- 3. Our translation is interpretative rather than an emendation.

PSALM 29

- 1. We follow Dahood in his explanation of bhdrt.
- A poetic description of lightning. The "voice of The Lord" is, of course, thunder.
- 3. The accent is on the first syllable in Oadesh.
- 4. Literally, "stripping bare."
- 5. We follow the meaning of Ugaritic 'mr and delete klw as dittography.

PSALM 30

- 1. Literally, "in his."
- 2. Another possibility: "set me on a mountain of strength."

PSALM 31

1. We emend b'yr to b't in order to get this translation.

PSALM 32

- 1. We have lengthened the line to retain its meaning.
- 2. We follow Dahood's basic insight in regard to 'ly.
- 3. "As hot as summer" means, of course, feverish.
- 4. As in Psalm 2:1, we follow Dahood in translating rq as "army."
- 5. Or, "in drawing it near you." The Heb is difficult and obscure.

PSALM 33

- 1. We omit yhwh for the sake of the meter.
- 2. Literally, "its armies."
- 3. We shorten the Heb line by one beat.
- 4. "His own" reads literally, "The Lord's."
- Compare the Gk, which reads katà mónas. We follow Dahood's translation here, though with some reservation.
- 6. Literally, "does not deliver."

- 1. We follow the Gk here.
- 2. Heb reads "The Lord." We choose "God" for metrical reasons.

- 3. The Heb has the second person singular here.
- 4. We follow the Gk, Syr, and Targ.

PSALM 35

- The association between wind and angels (messengers) is not unusual, though the repetition in vs. 6 makes us suspect this word here.
- 2. Dahood's translation is excellent here. We model ours after it. We take iht and ritm to be alternates in the text due to conflation. Another possible translation in the second line: "secretly dug it to kill me."
- 3. Literally, "unknown."
- 4. Literally, "may they fall to ruin in it."
- One may also translate it this way: "people I know not ask questions."
- 6. One may also translate it this way: "be bereaved, O my soul!"
- 7. Literally, "that it would turn." The Heb is problematical throughout these lines.
- 8. Another possibility: "a friend was like a brother to me."
- If we should follow the Gk here we would get the following:
 For to me they speak of peace
 while excitedly planning deceit.

PSALM 36

- 1. We extend this line to capture the full meaning of the Heb text.
- 2. Literally, "in his own eyes."
- 3. Literally, "you let them drink."
- 4. Or, emending *im* to *imm*, "The evildoers are appalled; they have fallen."

- 1. Literally, "inhabit the earth and feed on security."
- 2. Or, following the interpretation of the Gk, "lay open."
- 3. Literally, "those who hope in him."
- 4. One should know that the pasture lands of the Palestinian area enjoy only a brief season of verdure and that often the hot desert wind from the east will dry them up in a matter of hours.
- 5. The Gk has "cedar of Lebanon" instead of "green, growing cedar."
- The Heb is difficult in these two lines. One could have translated (in part), "watch the pure; behold the upright."
- 7. We delete one occurrence of yplim.

1. This is not a reference to the psalmist's friends and relatives: rather, to whatever invisible powers torment him with guilt and pain.

PSALM 39

1. We emend yhmywn to hmwn.

PSALM 40

- The Heb appears to be conflate. An alternative reading:
 Repeatedly you have performed
 your wonders and plans for us.
- 2. Literally, "you carved me two ears."
- 3. Is this a reference to a prophetic scroll which preaches this message? Compare Amos 5:21-24, Michah 6:6-8, Hosea 6:6, or Isaiah 1:12-17. More likely it is a reference to some special directions for the king's role in this part of the worship ceremony.
- 4. Literally, "I spoke of your faithfulness and salvation."
- 5. An important part of Hebrew worship was the public confession of God's mighty acts.
- 6. "Truth" in the sense of dependability.
- 7. Literally, "(that) I am not able to see."
- 8. With Dahood in ANB, we read rush, "run," as a fitting parallel to hwish.
- 9. We alter the Heb order of lines in vs. 15-17 for clarity and better style.

PSALM 41

 We add one beat in the meter to preserve the meaning of the line. Gk adds at the end, "and the needy." An alternate translation:

Happy is he who understands, though he be poor and needy.

- 2. We follow the Gk.
- 3. Literally, "may you not give him into the soul of his foes."
- 4. Literally, "all his couch you have turned to his sickness," but we emend kl to ky l. Dahood suggests a good alternative in ANB. He reads kl as a verb and renders it "sustain."
- 5. Literally, "his heart speaks what is false."
- 6. Literally, "shout against me."

TEXT: 11 on 13 and 10 on 11 Intertype Garamond DISPLAY: Garamont PAPER: Supple Offset

The Psalms in Modern Speech

For Public and Private Use

translated by RICHARD S. HANSON

Volume 1—Introduction and Psalms 1-41 Volume 2—Psalms 42-89 Volume 3—Psalms 90-150

In rendering the Psalter usable both in group and private worship, this remarkable translation of the Book of Psalms also makes a solid contribution to scholarship.

The Psalms are divided into meaningful groups of two or more verses, with instructions for responsive reading by the Cantor, Choir I, and Choir II. The author has followed the meter and captured the movement of the Hebrew poetry. He has divided each Psalm for responsive reading in a way intended by the Hebrew rubrics. This system, together with the striking limpidity of the translation, provides the reader with a greater insight into the Psalms, and makes this book a valuable addition to the congregation's worship materials. The Introduction in Volume 1 is a thorough statement which introduces the non-specialist to the role of the Psalms in Old Testament life, to the linguistic problems of translation, and to the enriching possibilities which the Psalms offer to contemporary worship. Helpful notes are included at the end of each volume.

Richard S. Hanson is a member of the faculty of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa. His doctoral work was done at Harvard University.

cover art by Tom Irons

FORTRESS PRESS PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19129

\$1.95 each, \$5.50 a set

FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE USE

PSALMS IN MODERN SPEECH

Translated by Richard S. Hanson

VOLUME 2
PSALMS 42-89

Volume 2

FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE USE

BY RICHARD S. HANSON

VOLUME 2 PSALMS 42-89

FORTRESS PRESS PHILADELPHIA



© 1968 BY FORTRESS PRESS

Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 68-29463

Printed in the United States of America

6091C68 1-1029

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Psalm	42	 1			
Psalm	43	 3	Psalm	67	 41
Psalm	44	 4	Psalm	68	 42
Psalm	45	 6	Psalm	69	 46
Psalm	46	 8	Psalm	70	 49
Psalm	47	 10	Psalm	71	 50
Psalm	48	 11	Psalm	72	 52
Psalm	49	 12	Psalm	73	 54
Psalm	50	 14	Psalm	74	 56
Psalm	51	 16	Psalm	75	 59
Psalm	52	 18	Psalm	76	 60
Psalm	53	 19	Psalm	77	 61
Psalm	54	 20	Psalm	78	 63
Psalm	55	 21	Psalm	79	 69
Psalm	56	 24	Psalm	80	 71
Psalm	57	 25	Psalm	81	 73
Psalm	58	 27	Psalm	82	 74
Psalm	59	 28	Psalm	83	 75
Psalm	60	 30	Psalm	84	 76
Psalm	61	 32	Psalm	85	 78
Psalm	62	 33	Psalm	86	 79
Psalm	- 6	 34	Psalm	87	 81
Psalm	-	 36	Psalm	88	 82
Psalm		 37	Psalm	-	 83
Psalm	66	 39	Notes		 89

An Introduction to The Psalms in Modern Speech is to be found in Volume 1, page 1.

For the conclusion. A maskil for the sons of Qorah.

CANTOR

² As a deer goes panting for brooks full of water, even so do I pant after you, O God.

CHOIR

- ³ My spirit has thirsted for God, for the Living God.
 - O when can I come and behold the countenance of God?
- My tears have served as my food by day and by night
 as they constantly say unto me, "Where is your God?"

CANTOR

5 These things I recall as I pour out my heart to myself: how I passed through Succoth and south¹ to the temple of God, with the sounds of singing and praise, with crowds rejoicing.

CHOIR

⁶ O why do you bend low, my spirit, and roar out against me?

Believe in God for still I confess him as my vindication, my God!²

⁷ My own spirit bends low against me: therefore I recall you.³

CANTOR

From the land of Jordan and Hermon, from the hill of Mits'ar,4

* the primeval waters call out in the sound of your falls.

(All of your rapids and currents have passed over me!)

By day The Lord orders his kindness; in the night his song is with me⁵
—a prayer to the Living God.
It says,
O God, my Rock
why do you ignore me?
Why must I grieve
while the enemy does violence
and bruises my bones?
My oppressors degrade me
by saying all day,
"Where is your God?"

CHOIR

¹² O why do you bend low, my spirit, and roar out against me? Believe in God, for still I confess him as my vindication, my God!

So close is this in style and content to Psalm 42 that one suspects it to be either a continuation of the former or else a psalm composed by the same writer.

CANTOR

Judge me, O God!
 Defend my case from an unkind people!
 Save me from the man of deceit and perversion!

² You are my Strengthening God:
why cast me off?
Why should I walk about grieving
while the foe does violence?
³ Send your light and your truth,
for they give me guidance.
May they bring me to your holy hill,
the place where you dwell!
⁴ Let me come to the altar of God,
to the joy of my youth.¹
I would praise you with music,
O God, my God.

CHOIR

O why do you bend low, my spirit, and roar out against me? Trust in God: I still will confess him my saving glory and my God!

For the conclusion. For the sons of Qorah, A maskil.

This is a lament and a protest which was written, no doubt, during the Exile, when the Hebrews were struggling to interpret that frightful catastrophe.

CANTOR

- ² O God, we have heard with our ears (our fathers have told us) the deed which you did in their days, with your hand in days of old.
- ³ You drove out other nations but made them take root, afflicted the peoples, but sent them in.¹
- *They did not take the land with their own sword; it was not their own arm that saved them.

 It was your hand and your arm and your favor that shone down upon them.

CHOIR

- ⁵ You are my King, O God, who determined the victories of Jacob.
- ⁶ You helped us push down our oppressors; in your name we stamped out our opponents.
- ⁷I could not trust in my bow; my sword cannot save me,
- but you have saved us from oppressors; you have put those who hate us to shame.

⁹ We always exult in our God; we shall praise his name forever.

Selah

CANTOR

- ¹⁰ But you have rejected and shamed us: you do not go out with our armies.
- You have let us retreat from our foes; our enemies have taken their plunder.
- ¹² You present us, like sheep, for food; you disperse us among the nations.
- 13 You are selling your people for nothing —not even demanding a price.
- ¹⁴ You make us the scorn of our neighbors, a joke to those round about us,
- 15 a byword, a laugh for the nations,² an object of scorn for the peoples.

CHOIR

- ¹⁶ My disgrace is always before me; shame has covered my head
- 17 because of the taunting and scoffing which comes from the persecuting enemy.
- ¹⁸ All this you did,³ though we did not forget you —nor have we been false to your covenant!
- Our loyalty has not wavered; our steps have not turned from you,
- 20 though you broke us at the place of jackals⁴ and covered us with the shadow of death.⁵
- ²¹ Had we spurned the name of our God or stretched out our hands to a strange god
- would not God have discovered it? He knows what is hidden in the mind.

CANTOR

²³ We are always being murdered for your sake; we are taken as sheep to be slaughtered.

CHOIR

- ²⁴ Get up, O Master! Why sleep? Awake! Do not leave us forever!
- 25 Why are you hiding your face, ignoring our trouble and oppression?
- Our life is laid down to the dust; our body adheres to the earth.
- 27 Rise! Be our help! Redeem us for the sake of your kindness!

PSALM 45

For the conclusion. Upon shoshanim. A maskil. A song of love.

This lovely song was perhaps first sung by a court minstrel in bonor of a wedding between a Davidic prince or king and a Phoenician princess.

CANTOR

² My heart is astir with a lovely thought, for I am to speak of the deeds of a king. My tongue is the pen of a poet prepared.

CHOIR

³ You are fairest of all mankind; kindliness pours from your lips because you are blessed of God forever.

CANTOR

- ⁴ Gird your sword to your hip, O hero, your praise and your pride!¹
- ⁵ Draw it, then ride on and rule for truth, for meekness, for right!² Your right hand can show you dread deeds,
- ⁶ Your arrows are sharp.

 Peoples are falling before you in the midst of the foes of the crown.

CHOIR

- Your throne, O God, will last forever. Your royal scepter a scepter of justice.
- 8 You love what is right and hate what is evil.

CANTOR

Therefore God has anointed you³ with more oil⁴ than all your companions ⁹—with incense and spices,

with perfumes in all of your garments.

CHOIR

From houses of ivory musicians delight you:

10 the daughters of monarchs your ladies-in-waiting,
the queen at your right hand in gold of Ophir.

5

CANTOR

¹¹ Look, daughter, listen! Lend me your ear! Forget your people, the home of your father!

¹² Let the king covet your beauty!

He is your master, so serve him!

- ¹³ O princess of Tyre, with gifts they persuade you
 —the richest of people—with all kinds of wealth.
- ¹⁴ A king's daughter sits in a setting of gold.
- ¹⁵ Clad in rich clothes she is brought to the king with maidens behind her, companions brought with her
- 16 —brought in with gladness and dancing as they enter the house of the king.
- ¹⁷ In the place of your forefathers there shall be sons who are set up as princes all through the land.
- ¹⁸ I will celebrate your name for all generations, because the peoples will praise you forever and ever.

PSALM 46

For the conclusion. For the sons of Qoraḥ. On 'alamoth. A song.

This psalm seems to reflect an historical situation from the end of the eighth century B.C. It expresses the confidence of men like the prophet Isaiah in the midst of the Assyrian threat. The "river whose channels gladden the city of God" suggests the water tunnel dug by King Hezekiah in an effort to insure a safe water supply for Jerusalem in time of siege.

CANTOR

- ² God is for us a refuge and strength, an often-proved help in times of distress.
- ³ Therefore we fear not though the Earth be shifting, though mountains move in the heart of the sea.

⁴ Its waters may roll and roar; the mountains may shake with its rising. Selah

CHOIR

⁵ There is a river whose channels¹ gladden the city of God.

Holy is the home of The Highest.

⁶ God is within her: she stands
At the first break of day God will help her.

CHOIR

⁷ Nations rumble; kingdoms totter. He speaks with his voice: earth melts away.

⁸ The Lord of Armies is with us; Jacob's God is our fort.

Selah

CHOIR

⁹ Come, see the deeds of The Lord
—how he brings devastation to Earth

¹⁰ by ending wars to the uttermost lands! He shatters the bow, splinters the spear and burns the chariots with fire.

CANTOR

¹¹ Relax and acknowledge that I am God. I arise among nations; I arise in the earth

CHOIR

¹² The Lord of Armies is with us; Jacob's God is our fort.

Selah

For the conclusion. For the sons of Qorah. A psalm.

CANTOR

- ² Clap your hands, all peoples! Cry out to God with a shout!
- ³ For The Lord, The Most High, is awesome, The Great King of all of the earth.
- ⁴ He subdues the tribes beneath him, the peoples beneath his feet,
- ⁵ and chooses us as his own, the pride of Jacob, his loved one.

Selah

CHOIR

- ⁶ God has gone up with a fanfare, The Lord, with the sound of a trumpet.
- ⁷ Sing unto God, yes sing! Sing to our King, yes sing,
- 8 for he is the King of the Earth! Sing a hymn unto God!

CANTOR

- ⁹ God made himself king over nations; he sits on his holy throne.¹
- ¹⁰ Gather round, O leaders of the peoples, for Abraham's God is mighty.

CHOIR

God rules the lords of the earth.² He is greatly exalted.

1 song. A psalm of the sons of Qorah.

CANTOR

² The Lord is great and mightily praised in the city of our God, his holy mountain.

CHOIR

³Ah, beautiful height,¹
the joy of the earth,
the hill of Zion,² the center of the world,³
the great King's city!

⁴ The God in her courts is acknowledged as a fortress.

CANTOR

- ⁵ Behold, the kings were assembed; they marched on together.
- ⁶ They, when they looked, were amazed; they retreated in terror.
- ⁷ Trembling seized them⁴ pains as of childbirth
- ⁸—as when the east wind is wrecking the ships of the merchant.

CHOIR

We have seen what we heard in the City of the Lord of Armies, the City of our God, which God created to endure.

Selah

CANTOR

- We have thought, O God, of your kindness in the midst of your temple.
- Your praise, God, befits your name throughout the earth. Justice fills your right hand.

CHOIR

¹² Be glad, mount Zion Let the daughters of Judah rejoice because of your judgments!

CANTOR

- ¹³ Walk around Zion in procession and count all her towers.
- Consider in your mind her defenses,
 explore her chambers,
 that you may describe it to later generations,
 for this is God's.

CHOIR

Our God, eternal, enduring, is he who can lead us forever.

PSALM 49

For the conclusion. For the sons of Qorah. A psalm.

The Hebrew text of this psalm is obscure and corrupted in some places. The message of the psalm, which is a didactic poem, is the same as that of Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes).

² Listen to this, all peoples!
Give ear, all citizens of Earth!

- ³ Men both common and noble, the rich and the poor together!
- ⁴ My mouth will utter wise things; the thoughts of my mind are instructive.¹
- ⁵ I will tune my ear for a lesson and expose my homily with a harp.
- ⁶ Why should I fear days of trouble, when the evil of the greedy surrounds me
- 7—of those who trust in their power and boast of tremendous wealth?
- 8 Lo, a man cannot ransom himself.² He cannot pay his money to God
- ⁹ and the price of his life is too high. Though he wear himself out and live over,
- 10 Will he not, in the end, see the grave?3
- ¹¹ He must see that wise men will die; they shall perish along with the fools and leave what they earned for others.
- 12 Their eternal home is the grave, their dwelling for all generations even though they called countries their own.
- ¹³ The splendor of man cannot last: he is just like the beasts, who perish.
- 14 This is the fate of the wealthy,4 the last reward of the glutton.
- ¹⁵ Like sheep, they are numbered for Deathland; death is the shepherd who rules them.⁵

- ¹⁰ But God can ransom my life and release me from Deathland's grasp.
- ¹⁷ Fear not when a man becomes rich, when the wealth of his house increases.
- ¹⁸ When he dies he takes nothing along: his glory will not descend with him.
- ¹⁹ His life may be blest while living. They may praise you for all your good fortune,
- ²⁰ but, gone to the realm of your fathers, you will never again see the light.⁶
- ²¹ Man, in his splendor, knows nothing; he is just like the beasts, who perish.⁷

PSALM 50

A psalm for Asaph.

This is one of a few truly "prophetic" psalms. It is a hymnic version of a kind of phophetic oracle popular in the eighth century B.C., a type of oracle known among scholars as a "divine lawsuit." The prophet Micah made much use of this type. Other examples are to be found in Deuteronomy 32, Isaiah 1:2–3 and Jeremiah 2:4–13. Note how it logically divides into these parts: (1) the summons to trial, (2) the indictment, and (3) the judgment.

God of Gods, The Lord, has spoken and summoned the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. ² From Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth.

- ³ God comes: let him not be silent! Fire devours before him; tempestuous winds surround him.
- ⁴ He calls to the heavens above, to the earth, to judge his people,
- 5 "Gather my faithful before me, who sealed my covenant with sacrifice!"
- ⁶ and the heavens declare his right, for he, God, is the judge.
- 7 "Listen, my folk, while I speak! O Israel, I testify against you, I, who am God, yes your God.
- ⁸ For no lack of offerings I scold you, for your fires¹ are always before me.
- 9 I desire no bull from your temple nor rams from your fattening pens.
- 10 I own all the beasts of the forest and the cattle on the tribal hills.
- ¹¹ I know every bird of the mountains and the beasts² of the field are my friends.
- ¹² I would tell you if I were hungry, for the world and its creatures are mine,
- ¹³ but do I eat the beef of the steers? Do I drink the blood of the rams?
- Offer to God some praise and fulfill your vows to The Highest!
- ¹⁵ Call me in times of oppression: I will help you and you will give glory.''³
- 16 God has said to the wicked, "Should you recite my commandments or speak with your mouth of my covenant?

- ¹⁷—for you have despised my instruction and thrown my words behind you!
- ¹⁸ When you see a thief you approve him and you share the adulterer's fun.
- ¹⁹ You permit your mouth to speak evil and fasten your tongue to a lie.
- 20 You sit and slander your brother, finding fault with your nearest of kin.
- You have done this and I have been silent, while you thought that I was like you!
 I accuse you; I put it before you.
- ²² Understand this, forsakers of God, lest I snatch and there be none to rescue!
- ²³ An offering of praise gives me honor. If a man keep my ways⁴ I will show the salvation of God.

PSALM 51

For the conclusion. A psalm for David when Nathan the prophet came to him after his affair with Bath-Sheba.

The final stanza of this psalm appears to be a postscript from a different—and later—hand. It seeks to rationalize the legitimacy of sacrificial offerings in the temple.

CANTOR

- ³ Pity me, God, in your kindness!
 With abundant compassion blot out my guilt!
- ⁴ Thoroughly wash out my evil and cleanse me from sin!

- ⁵ I know my rebellions full well; my sin is ever before me.
- ⁶ Against you alone have I sinned; in your sight I have done this bad thing. Therefore you are right to accuse correct in your judgment.
- 7 I entered this life with evil; with sin my mother conceived me.
- 8 You desire something steadfast inside; you would make me wise in my mind.
- ⁹ You would purge me with hyssop to cleanse me; you would wash me much whiter than snow.
- 10 You would make me hear singing and gladness that the bones you have crushed might rejoice.
- ¹¹ O hide your face from my sins and blot out my guilt!
- ¹² Create in my mind a clear conscience!¹
 Renew a firm spirit with me!
- ¹³ Reject me not from your presence! Take not your holy power from me!
- 14 Give me back the joy of your help! Let a willing spirit sustain me!
- ¹⁵ I would teach the rebellious your ways, that sinners might turn unto you.
- O God, my salvation, that my tongue may sing of your triumph!
- ¹⁷ Open my lips, O Master, that my mouth may proclaim your praise!

- 18 If you want an offering I will give it, but a sacrifice will not please you.
- ¹⁰ My offering, O God, is a broken spirit.
 A broken, a crushed heart, O God, you cannot despise.

CHOIR

Do good to Zion, if you will.
 Let the walls of Jerusalem be built!
 Then the right offerings will please you,
 burnt and complete;
 then they can bring up the beasts to the altar.

PSALM 52

For the conclusion. A *maskil* for David when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, "David has gone to the house of Ahimelech."

CANTOR

- 3 Why do you boast of evil, O mighty hero?1
- ⁴ Your tongue is a well-honed razor which does tricky things.
- ⁵ You have more love for evil than good, for falsehood than speaking the truth.
- ⁶ You love all damaging words, you deceitful tongue!
- ⁷ God will ultimately break you. He will snatch you out of your tent uproot you from the land of the living.

Selak

CHOIR

- 8 The righteous will look on with awe; they will laugh over him:
- "Look at the man who does not make God his stronghold! He trusts the abundance of his wealth, takes strength from his damaging deeds."2
- ¹⁰ As for me, I am like a green olive tree in the household of God.
 I have trusted the kindness of God all of my life.³
- ¹¹ I will always confess what you do and call out that your name is good in the presence of your saints.

PSALM 53

For the conclusion. Upon mahlath. A maskil for David.

This and Psalm 14 are two versions of the same psalm. Both texts have suffered much corruption. See Psalm 14 for notes.

CANTOR

² The fool has said to himself, "There is no God. They destroy; they do what is foul. There is none who does good."

CHOIR

³ God looks down from the heavens on the offspring of man to see if there may be a wise one, one who seeks God.

⁴ But all turn, corrupted together. There is none who does good; there is none, not one.

CANTOR

5 Do those workers of evil who devour my people not know? They have eaten the bread of God but call not on his name.

⁶ They will suffer great terror, for God abides with the righteous. The afflicted will shame them, for The Lord is his refuge.¹

CHOIR

O that help for Israel would come out of Zion! When God removes the captivity of his people, Judah will rejoice, Israel be glad.

PSALM 54

For the conclusion. With strings (?). A maskil for David when the Ziphites went and told Saul, "David is hiding among us."

- ³ Save me, O God, by your name! Vindicate me with your strength!
- ⁴ Give heed to my prayer, O God! Lend an ear to my words!
- 5 Strangers¹ have risen against me; terrible men seek to destroy me, men who do not respect God.

Selah

- ⁶ But see now: God is my helper! The Master is he who upholds me.
- ⁷ Let the trouble return to my foes! In your faithfulness silence them!
- 8 I will give you a dedicatory offering and confess The Lord's name for its goodness.
- ⁹ He saves me from every oppressor. My eye looks down on my foes.

For the conclusion. In neginoth. A maskil for David.

CANTOR

- ² Give ear to my prayer, O God! Do not hide from my pleading!
- ³ Pay attention to me and give answer! I am restless with grumbling,
- disturbed at the sounds of the foe, at the threat of the pressure of the wicked, for they thrust trouble upon me and angrily oppose me.
- ⁵ My heart is in travail within me; the tremors of death are upon me.
- ⁶ Fear and trembling have seized me and shudders sweep over me.
- ⁷ So I say,
 "Had I but the wings of a dove.
 I would fly off and rest.

- 8 Yes, I would wander afar; I would lodge in the desert.
- ⁹ I would hasten to my refuge from the raging wind and the tempest."

CHOIR

¹⁰ Devour, O Master! Confound their tongues! I have seen violence and strife in the city,

11 going around on her walls by day and by night.

Mischief and trouble are in her.

There is ruin inside.
Fraud and deceit
will not leave her streets.

CANTOR

Were he a foe who taunts me I could bear it.
Were he an enemy who boasts

I could hide from him.

14 But you—a man of my kind,

trusted and known!

We enjoyed conversation together.
We walked with the crowd to God's temple.

CHOIR

¹⁶ Send¹ death against them! May the living go down to Deathland! There is evil among them.²

CANTOR

¹⁷ As for me, I will call upon God, for The Lord will save me. 18 At evening, at morning, at noontime
 I meditate and muse.
 May he listen to my voice
19 and bring back my life for safekeeping
 from the battle I wage,³
 for in great numbers they approach me.⁴

CHOIR

²⁰ Listen, O God, and give answer,⁵ you who reign from of old, whose character never changes, God the unseen.⁶

CANTOR

²¹ He dared to oppose his friends, to profane his covenant.⁷

²² His lips are smoother than butter, but his mind makes war. His words, though softer than oil, are really drawn daggers.⁸

CHOIR

²³ Cast your cares⁹ on The Lord, for he will sustain¹⁰ you. He will never permit the righteous to fall.

CANTOR

²⁴ You, O God, send them down to the pit of destruction!

They are worshippers of idols and falsehood.¹¹ They cannot live half a lifetime.¹² As for me, I will trust you.

For the conclusion. To "The Dove of the Distant Oaks." For David: a *miktam* (in honor of when) the Philistines imprisoned him in Gath.

The text of this psalm is so corrupt that at points we are unable to offer any sure translation. There is evidence that much of this apparent corruption is due to the fact that two ancient versions of the psalm have been combined to give us conflate readings in at least two stanzas of the psalm.

- 2-3 Pity me, O God! My enemies continually gasp as many arise to fight me.
- 4-5 I trust God: I shall not fear what mere flesh can do unto me. 1
 - ⁶ They continually grieve me²
 All their thoughts are against me for evil.
 - ⁷ They lurk and they ambush; they watch at my heels as they wait for my life.
 - ⁸ Deliver them from no one!

 At the wrath of the peoples descend, O God!
 - ⁹ I have told you about my lostness. Let my tears be put in a bottle! Is it not in your word?

—"then they will turn, my enemies will retreat on the day when I call."

I know this: that God is with me.

11-12 In God I rejoice.

I trust in his word and fear not what mere man can do unto me.³

¹³ There is something I owe you, O God, and I pay it with hymns of praise.

14 You have rescued my life from death, yes, guarded my feet from falling, that I might walk before God in the light of life.

PSALM 57

For the conclusion. Do not destroy. A *miktam* for David in (honor of) his flight from Saul into the cave.

CANTOR

- ² Pity me, God, pity me! In you my soul has sought refuge. In the shade of your wings I take refuge until the dangers pass by.
- ³ I cry unto God, The Most High, to God, The Accomplisher, The Highest.¹
- ⁴ May he reach out from Heaven and save me! May he put my oppressors to shame!²

May God reach out with his kindness and truth and save my life!a

I lie down to sleep among lions, devourers of men. whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharpened swords.

CHOIR

" God stands higher than the heavens; his glory is above the whole word.

CANTOR

⁷ They have set out a trap for my feet (be humble, my soul). They have dug a pit before me. May they fall inside it!4

Selah

my mind is at ease.

I will chant! I will sing!

⁹ Awake, my pride! Awake, O harp, O lyre! I would waken with the dawn.5

* But my mind is at ease, O God,

¹⁰ I confess you, O Lord, to the peoples; I praise you to the masses,

11 for your kindness is great as the heavens and your steadfastness reaches the clouds.

CHOIR

God stands higher than the heavens; his glory is above the whole world.

For the conclusion. Do not destroy. A miktam for David.

This psalm is unusual in that it begins by addressing the false gods who rule among men. The message of the psalm (which may be a relatively old one): the false gods are perverse and inactive, but there is One who is really God, who avenges his people and rules the earth.

CANTOR

- ² Surely you gods should speak what is right.
 Can you not judge correctly the sons of mankind?
- ³ With perverted minds you work in the earth! Your hands deal out injustice!

CHOIR

- ⁴ The wicked are perverse. They err from their birth; they come from the womb speaking lies.
- Theirs is a poison like the poison of a snake.

 They are deaf as a cobra, which has no ear,
- 6 unable to hear the voice of the charmer, who mutters his wise incantations.

CANTOR

- ⁷ O God, break the teeth in their mouth! Tear out the fangs of those lions, O Lord!
- * May they vanish¹ like water which flows on its way, May they journey outside, as those cut off!²
- ⁹ Just like a snail that slips through the mud, like an unborn fetus that sees not the sun!

CHOIR

¹¹ May The Righteous One be glad when he has seen vengeance

and washes his feet in the blood of the wicked!

12 Let mankind say, "Success to The Righteous One! There is really a God who judges the earth!"

PSALM 59

For the conclusion. Do not destroy. A *miktam* for David (in honor of) when Saul sent and they watched the house in order to kill him.

In addition to being written in honor of a danger-filled episode in David's life, this psalm was apparently composed in time of siege.

CANTOR

- ² Spare me from my foes, O my God! Protect me from those who oppose me!
- ³ Spare me from those who do evil!

 Save me from those who serve idols!¹
- See how they ambush my life, gathering fiercely against me!
 It is not my rebellion or sin, Lord:
- for no cause they run and prepare.

 Awake to my cry and look!
- ⁶ You are the Lord of Armies,² the God of Israel.

 Arise to examine the nations!

 Show the treacherous no pity!

Selah

CHOIR

⁷ They come back at evening. They growl like a dog and surround the city.

8 Behold, they foam at the mouth! They have taunts³ on their lips but who can listen?

CANTOR

⁹ You, O Lord, can deride them; you can mock all the nations.

O my strength, I will sing unto you,4 for God is my fortress!

CHOIR

¹¹ My kind and faithful God meets me. God lets me look down on my foes.

CANTOR

¹² Slay them not, lest my people forget!⁵
By your might make them waver and fall,
O Master, our Chief!⁶

For the sin of their mouths, for the words of their lips,

let them be caught in their pride!

For the curses and lies which they utter,

14 consume them in wrath!

Completely consume them!7

May they know that God rules out of Jacob

to the ends of the earth!

Selah

CHOIR

- 15 So let them come back at evening. Let them growl like a dog and surround the city.
- 16 Lo, they must wander for food and if they are not fed they grumble.

CANTOR

¹⁷ But I, I can sing of your strength and chant in the morn of your kindness. You have proven to be my fortress, a refuge when I am in trouble.

CHOIR

¹⁸ My strength, unto you I will chant, for God is my fortress, my Faithful God!

PSALM 60

For the conclusion. Upon Shushan Eduth. A didactic miktam for David (in honor of) when he fought with Aram-Naharaim and Aram-Tsobah, when Joab had returned and attacked 12,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt.

This psalm was apparently written in the midst of a war situation which was not going entirely well for the Israelites. It was designed to be recited before battle and, in vss. 8-10, contains a prophetic oracle appropriate to the occasion.

CANTOR

³ O God, you rejected and damaged us. You were angry, but do now restore us!

- ⁴ You shook up the earth and cracked it. Heal her fissures: she trembles!
- ⁵ You let us¹ experience great hardship; you made us drink very strong wine.

CHOIR

⁶ But you gave to your followers a banner for rallying when battle is near. Selah

⁷ May your loved one, therefore, be rescued!
With your right arm bring victory and triumph!²

CANTOR

- S God, in his holiness has spoken:
 "I exult as I portion out Shechem,
 as I measure out Emeg Succoth.
- Gilead is mine—and Manasseh; Ephraim, the helmet of my head.³ Judah is my scepter,
- Moab my washbowl, and I now cast my sandal for Edom.⁴ I have shouted in triumph at Philistia.
- Who will bring me to a fortified city? Who will lead me into Edom?"

- Do you now reject us, O God? Will you not come out, God, with your armies?
- ¹³ Come with us to help fight the foe, for human salvation is vain!
- With God we can valiantly do it; it is he who can tread down our foes.

For the conclusion. On the strings. For David.

Verses 6-8 betray the fact that this was part of a royal liturer (the prayer for the king).

CANTOR

- ² Hearken, O God, to my cry! Listen to my prayer!
- ³ From the brink of the earth¹ I call you, my mind in despair.

CHOIR

Lead me to a towering rock.2

- ⁴ May you be my refuge,³ a strong tower in front of the foe.
- ⁵ I would dwell in your tent forever, take refuge in the cover of your wings.

Selah

CANTOR

- ⁶ You, O God listen³ to my vows. Give to your worshippers the heritage due them.4
- ⁷ May you add many days to the king's life, years that go on and on!
- * May he sit before God forever! May kindness and truth protect him!

CHOIR

⁹ I shall always sing to your name, fulfilling my vows each day.

For the conclusion. On Yeduthun. 1 A psalm for David.

The first portion of this psalm is quote old. Beginning with verse 10 we have a later addition—or series of later additions—of a didactic nature.

CHOIR

- ² Be silent before God, my soul: he bears my salvation!
- ³ Yes, he is my rock and my help —my fortress: I will not be shaken.²

CANTOR

⁴ How long will you fall on a man to crush him? You are all like a tottering city, a sagging wall, ⁵ which resist being lifted, and so one must hasten to flee.³ With deceit in their mouths they speak blessing while they inwardly curse. Selah

CHOIR

- ⁶ Be silent before God, my soul, for he bears my hope.
- The is my rock and my help
 —my fortress: I will not be shaken.

CANTOR

⁸ God has gone up!—my Salvation, my Glory, my Rock and my Strength! In God I take refuge.⁴

⁹ Trust him at all times, O people! Pour out your hearts before him. God is the refuge for us.

Selah

CHOIR

The ordinary men are but vapor; the men of rank, but a lie. Put them together in the scales: they are lighter than vapor.

CANTOR

Trust not unfair gain; do not desire⁵ plunder. When wealth is abounding, rely not upon it.

CHOIR

12 God spoke once; twice I have heard it: strength is of God.
13 Kindness is yours, O Master. It is you who repay a man for his deeds.

PSALM 63

A psalm for David (in honor of) when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

CANTOR

² O God, my God, I eagerly await you. My life thirsts for you; my flesh yearns¹ for you in a waterless, desolate desert. ³ Yes, in Qadesh² I looked to see your power and your glory,

4 for your kindness is better than life.

CHOIR

My lips shall praise.

⁵ While I live I will bless you and pray in your name.³

CANTOR

⁶ As with marrow and fat may you surfeit my life and my singing lips shall praise you.

If I could recall you at bedtime⁴
 I would think of you through the night

8 —of how you had helped me.
In the shelter of your wings I would sing.

CHOIR

⁹ My life most desperately needs you;⁵ your right arm has hold of me.

CANTOR

¹⁰ As for those who seek to ruin my life,⁶ may they go to the depths of the earth!

May the sword force them to wander! May the haunts of the jackals be theirs!

CHOIR

May the king rejoice in God's strength! May all who swear by him boast, for he shuts the mouth of deceivers!

For the conclusion. A psalm for David.

CANTOR

- ² Listen, O God, to my voice as I muse, that you guard my life from the dread of the foe,
- ³ protect me from the council of evildoers, from the tumult of those who make trouble,
- 4 who sharpen their tongues like a sword! They have drawn their poisonous arrows1
- 5 to secretly shoot at the blameless.

CHOIR

Suddenly they shoot without fear.

- ⁶ They encourage themselves; they speak a bad word. As they set their traps they say, "Who can see us?
- The them search for a fault: we have hidden a well-planned scheme." The mind and thoughts of a man are deep.²

CANTOR

- 8 But God will shoot them with an arrow and suddenly they shall be wounded
- ⁹ as they trip themselves up with their own tongues, while those who look on wag their heads.

CHOIR

- ¹⁰ All men shall pay homage. They shall confess it God's deed and ponder his act.
- ¹¹ Let the righteous rejoice in The Lord as they trust in him! Let all honest men sing praise!

PSALM 65

For the conclusion. A psalm for David. A song.

Content and style suggest that this is among the older praise bymns. Note how it is rooted in the life of nature and agriculture. The occasion for the hymn: the feast of firstfruits.

CANTOR

- ² A praise hymn befits you in Zion, O God; a paid pledge as well,
- ³ you, who listens to prayer.
 All flesh should come before you.

- ⁴ Iniquitous words overpower us,¹ but you can forgive our transgressions.
- ⁵ Happy is he whom you choose and bring near,² who can dwell in your courts, satisfied by³ the goodness of your house, by the holiness of your temple!

CANTOR

⁶ You triumph⁴ with victorious wonders, our saving God, as you tie down the ends of the earth

and the wide, open sea,
⁷ as you mightily set up the mountains

- ' as you mightily set up the mountain all girded with strength,
- 8 as you silence the swell of the seas, the swell of its waves,⁵ and the tumult of peoples.⁶
- Those who live far away stand in awe at your signs.

The cycles of morning and evening sing out.

You have visited the earth with water;
you abundantly enrich it.

The rain trough of God is full of water.
You give root to the grain,
for so you create it.⁷

- You water its furrows; you make the clouds pour. You saturate with showers; you bless the new sprouts.
- ¹² You envelope the year with your goodness; its rutted tracks trickle with oil.
- 13 The fields of the wilderness are wet and the hills are clothed with gladness.
- 14 The slopes are covered with flocks and the valleys are groaning with grain. They shout, yes, they sing.

For the conclusion. A song. A psalm.

CANTOR

Cry out unto God, all the earth!

- ² Sing out the glory of his name! Chant the glory of his praise!¹
- ³ Say unto God, "How awesome your deeds! Because of your great might your enemies are cringing.
- May the whole earth pay homage to you!
 May they sing unto you!
 May they sing out your name!"

 Selah

CHOIR

- ⁵ Come now and see the things God has done! The awe of his action² is over all men.
- ⁶ He dried up the sea and they passed through the river on foot. Let us be happy in him!³

CANTOR

He rules the world with his might.
 His eyes keep watch on the nations.
 No rebel dare stand up before him.

Selah

- Bless our God, O peoples!Let him hear the sound of his praise!
- ⁹ He sustains our being with life and prevents our feet from stumbling.

CANTOR

- 10 You have tried us, O God, and refined us like silver.
- You brought us to rock land and placed oppression upon us.⁴
- You let a man tread on our heads. We went through fire and water, but you brought us through.

CHOIR

- ¹³ I will enter your house with burnt offerings, fulfilling my vow.⁵
- (I had opened my lips; in distress I spoke out:
- "I will offer up burning fatlings with the smoke of the gods.

 I will do it with an ox or a goat.")

Selah

CANTOR

- ¹⁶ Come, listen as I tell you, all you who fear God, just what he has done for my life.
- ¹⁷ I called out to him, keeping pride under my tongue⁰
- 18 (If I should find guilt in my mind The Master would not listen),
- 10 and then God listened.
 He heard the sound of my prayer.

CHOIR

²⁰ Blessed be God! He did not reject my prayer nor his covenant-love with me!

For the conclusion. With strings. A psalm. A song.

The reference to the earth yielding its produce suggests that this hymn was designed for the harvest festival, the Feast of Weeks.

CANTOR

² May God pity us and bless us!

May his face beam kindly upon us

Selah

3 that his way may be known upon Earth, his saving acts in all nations!

CHOIR

- ⁴ May the peoples confess you, O God! May all of the peoples confess you!
- ⁵ May the masses rejoice and sing out, for you judge the peoples correctly and pity the masses on Earth!

Selah

CANTOR

- ⁶ May the peoples confess you, O God! May all of the peoples confess you!
- ⁷ The earth has yielded its produce.

CHOIR

May God, our God, bless us!

8 May God bless us that all the world may respect him!

For the conclusion, For David, A psalm, A song,

This is undoubtedly one of the oldest psalms in the Psalter. Its style and imagery place it in the same general period of time as the great hymns found in Exodus 15 and Judges 5. In its origin it is pre-Davidic, though portions of the psalm may well be later. The psalm seems to be made up of various fragments, though their apparent unrelatedness may only reflect how far we are from understanding its ancient terminology.

CANTOR

² May God arise! May his foes disperse! May his enemies flee before him!

CHOIR

^a May you drive them like blowing smoke, like the melting of wax in a fire!

CANTOR

May the wicked perish at the sight of God while the righteous rejoice, exult in the presence of God and revel in joy!

- Sing unto God! Chant his name!
 Swell praise to The Rider of Clouds!
 The Lord is his name—exult before him!—,
- The Father of Orphans, Protector of Widows, God-in-his-Holy-Retreat,

⁷ God, who lets chosen ones dwell in his house, and leads forth prisoners² as choirs.³
Yes, select ones⁴ dwell in his court.⁵

CANTOR

- 8 O God, when you went out in front of your people, when you marched from the Desert,
- ⁹ the earth fairly shook, the heavens poured rain before Him of Sinai,⁶ before the High God, the God of Israel.

CANTOR

- ¹⁰ May you sprinkle rain in abundance, O God. Your land is dry and you must revive it.
- May your creatures dwell there.
 Sustain the needy with your goodness, O God.

CANTOR

- ¹² Give command, O Master; the messengers⁷ are a mighty army.
- May the kings of the armies flee!8
 May they flee with the women of the house as the spoil is divided!
- 14 You had best seek divine protection, the wings of a dove, covered with gold, its pinions of overleaf.9
- 15 The Almighty is scattering kings and making it snow on Salmon.¹⁰

CHOIR

¹⁸ The mountain of God, the mountain Bashan, ¹¹ is a lofty mountain, that mountain Bashan.

Why look in envy, O lofty mountains, at the mountain which God has desired as his dwelling?

The Lord will dwell there forever.

CANTOR

¹⁸ The chariotry of God is a double-myriad of the troops of Shin-an.¹² The Lord made Sinai his temple.¹³

You ascend to the height; you sit on your seat and accept the offerings of humans, select men to dwell with The Lord.¹⁴

CHOIR

Day by day he supports us, this God, our salvation.

Selah

Through saving acts he is God, The Lord, The Master, who leads us from death.

²² He is God, who shatters the head of his foes, the hairy skulls of those who are guilty.

CANTOR

²⁸ The Master has said,
"I return from Bashan,

from the source15 of the sea."

- 24 Therefore you are bathing your legs in blood.¹⁶
 A piece of the foe for the tongue of your dogs!
- 25 They have seen your procession, O God.
 The procession of my God, my King, in the temple.
- ²⁶ The leaders draw near, the musicians¹⁷ behind them: in the midst of the maidens with timbrels.¹⁸

CHOIR

²⁷ Bless God in the court of assembly, The Lord in the meeting place of Israel!

²⁸ There we see Benjamin, youngest of the rulers, ¹⁹ the leaders of Judah with their throng, the leaders of Zebulon, the leaders of Naphtali.

CANTOR

²⁹ Give command, O God!

Exert your strength, O God, in all that you do for us!

30 From your temple over Jerusalem may kings bring gifts unto you!

31 Rebuke the wild beast, the band of wild men, the calves of the peoples that trample in lust of silver!20

³² Let them bring bronze²¹ from the land of Egypt. May Cush²² be running with hands raised to God.

33 The kingdoms of Earth must sing unto God.
They must chant to The Master, Selah

34 The Rider of the Heavens, whose name is of old, whose voice sounds forth as a voice full of power.

CHOIR

35 Ascribe strength unto God! His pride is over Israel; his strength is in the clouds.

36 How awesome is God in his holiness23

-the god of Israel,

he who gives strength and power to his people. Blessed be God!

For the conclusion. Upon shoshanim. For David.

CANTOR

- ² Save me, O God, for waters threaten to drown me!
- ³ I have sunk in the mire of the depth: there is no place to stand.

 I have entered the trenches of water: currents engulf me.
- ⁴ I am hoarse with my crying; my throat is all scorched. My eyes are worn out from awaiting my God.
- More numerous than the hairs of my head are those who, without cause, hate me.
 My false-dealing foes, my destroyers, are mighty.

Should I give back what I have not taken?¹

- ⁶ O God, you alone can know my mistakes. I cannot hide my guilt from you.
- ⁷ Let me not bring shame to your believers, O Lord of Armies!

Let me not discourage your seekers, O God of Israel!

8 For you I have borne reproach; degradation has covered my face.

- ⁹ I became an alien to my brothers, a stranger to my own mother's sons.
- ¹⁰ Zeal for your house had devoured me; the abuse of your abusers fell on me.
- ¹¹ So I wept² as I underwent fasting and that became cause for abuse.
- ¹² I gave myself sackcloth for clothing and became the butt of their scorn.
- ¹³ The loafers at the gateway discuss me; I am the song of the drunkard.³
- ¹⁴ As for me, my prayer is to you. May it be acceptable, O God!⁴ In your abundant kindness respond! With your dependable help
- take me out of the mire that I may not sink but be saved from my foes, from the trenches of water!⁵
- Do not let the currents engulf me! Do not let the deep water swallow me! Do not let the grave's mouth enfold me!
- ¹⁷ Answer me, Lord, for your kindness is good! With your abundant compassion please turn unto me!
- ¹⁸ Do not hide your face from your servant! I am troubled: hasten to answer!
- Draw near to my life and redeem it! Because I have foes, redeem me!
- ²⁰ Surely you know my abuse —my shame, my degradation!

My oppressors are before you.

²¹ Abuse has broken my heart:

I look for pity but there is none, for a comforter, but I cannot find one.

- 22 In my food they gave me poison; for my thirst they give me sour vinegar.
- ²³ May their table be a trap before them and their banquet a snare!
- ²⁴ May their eyes be prevented from seeing! Make their hips permanently lame!
- ²⁵ Pour out your anger upon them! Let the wrath of your presence overtake them!
- 26 Make their encampment a ruin that no one may dwell in their tents,
- 27 for they persecute him whom you struck and speak of the wound of your victim!
- 28 Place guilt on their guilt! In your justice reject them!
- 20 Blot them out of the book of life!
 Write not their names with the righteous!
- ³⁰ Ah me, I am needy and sick.
 Protect me, O God, with your help!
- 31 I will praise God's name with a song, extol it with a hymn!
- 32 The Lord prefers this to an ox, to a bull with its horns and hoofs.
- 33 When the downtrodden see they rejoice.
 You who seek after God, let your hearts now live!

CHOIR

- 34 The Lord always listens to the poor; he does not despise the rejected.
- ³⁵ Let Heaven and Earth give praise, the seas and the creatures within it,
- ³⁶ for God is helping Zion and rebuilding the cities of Judah!
- ³⁷ His servants' offspring shall have it; the lovers of his name shall abide there.

PSALM 70

For the conclusion. A memorial psalm for David.

CANTOR

- ² Hasten, O God, to deliver me, O Lord, to help me!
- May my life's tormentor's be shamed and dismayed! May those who desire to hurt me retreat in disgrace!
- 4 May those who cry "Aha! Aha!" turn back because of their shame!
- But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad!
 May those who love your help continually repeat, "Let God be extolled!"

CHOIR

Ah me, I am needy and poor:
 hasten to me, God!
 You are my help, my deliverance:
 O Lord, do not tarry!

- ¹ I trust you, O Lord:
- 1 let me never be shamed!
- ² In your justice rescue, deliver me!

 Bend your ear toward me and save me!
- ³ Become now my rockbound dwelling,¹ my fortified house for salvation,² for you are my rock-cliff, my fortress!
- ⁴ Deliver me, my God, from the wicked, from the hand of the criminal, the oppressor.
- 5 for you are my hope, O Master, O Lord, my security since childhood!
- ⁶ I have leaned upon you since birth; you took me³ as soon as I was born. You are always my boast.
- ⁷ The fact that you mightily guard me is a sign unto many.
- ⁸ My mouth is full of your praise, always giving glory.⁴
- ⁹ Do not cast me off in old age! When my strength is spent do not leave me!
- Those who watch for my life and consult together —my enemies—have said,
- "God has abandoned him. Persecute! Seize him! There is none to give help."
- ¹² O God, do not stay far from me! Hasten, my God, to my aid!

- May my foes be shamed and destroyed! May those who seek my misfortune be clothed in disgrace and dishonor!
- ¹⁴ As for me, I continue to wait. I shall add prayer upon prayer.
- ¹⁵ My mouth always tells of your victories and triumphs —how no one is able to count them.
- ¹⁶ I enter with boasting, O Lord; I recite your singular triumphs.
- ¹⁷ O God, you have taught me since childhood and I still proclaim your wonders.
- When I become old and grey,
 O God, do not leave me
 until I can tell to those coming,
 to your seed of the next generation,
 your excellent triumphs, O God,
 your powers, the things you have done!
 O God, who is like you?
- ²⁰ You made me see troubles—many and severe.⁶ Resurrect and revive me! From the chaos of earth may you once again lift me!
 ²¹ Increase my stature
- and surround me with mercy!
- Then surely, my God, for your faithfulness,
 I will praise you with music.⁷
 I will sing unto you with a harp,
 O Holy One of Israel.

²³ My lips shall ring out as I sing unto you for the life which you have redeemed.

²⁴ My tongue at all times will speak of your triumph, while those who sought evil are shamed and dismayed.

PSALM 72

For Solomon.

This prayer was undoubtedly recited at the coronation of kings and perhaps at annual festivals celebrating the same.

CANTOR

O God, give your justice¹ to the king, your righteousness to the prince,

- ² that he rule your people correctly, your needy ones justly!
- ³ May the hills produce peace for the people, the mountains bring victory!
- ⁴ May he plead for the needy, give help to the poor and crush the oppressor!

CHOIR

May they fear you, O Might of the Sun, O Face of the Moon, forever and ever.²

CANTOR

⁶ Descend, O rain, on the grass, O showers that soak the land!³

- ⁷ Make his days fruitful, O Righteous One! Increase the yearly prosperity.⁴
- 8 May he rule from sea unto sea, from the River to the ends of the earth!
- ⁹ May the sea countries bow before him! May his enemies grovel in the dust!
- ¹⁰ May the kings of Tarshish and Greece bring him a gift! May the kings of Sheba and Seba

draw near with tribute!

- May all the kings bow before him! May all nations serve him.
- 12 May he rescue the poor who plead, the needy when there is no help!
- May he pity the poor and the destitute! May he save the lives of the poor!
- 14 May he ransom their lives from oppression and trouble! May their blood be precious in his sight!

CHOIR

15 May he live!5

May they give him the gold of Seba! May they pray continually for him! May they constantly bless him!

¹⁶ May there be much grain⁶ in the land, on the tops of the hills! May its fruit tremble like Lebanon!

May it blossom from the city like the grass of the earth!

CANTOR

17 May his name endure!

May his name increase, O Face of the Sun!

May all nations speak blessings by him

and congratulate him!

CHOIR

- ¹⁸ Blessed be The Lord, God,⁸ the God of Israel, who alone can do marvelous deeds!
- ¹⁰ Blessed be his honorable name forever! May his glory fill all the earth! Amen and Amen!
- ²⁰ The prayers of David, son of Jesse, are ended.

PSALM 73

A psalm for Asaph.

CHOIR

How good is God for Israel, for the pure of heart!

- ² As for me, my feet had almost stumbled; my steps had well nigh slipped.
- ³ I was jealous of the arrogant and envied the prosperity of the wicked.
- ⁴ They have no pains¹ when they die. Their folly brings fortune.²
- ⁵ They share not the toil of mankind and escape human suffering.
- ⁶ Therefore they deck themselves proudly³ with violent ways as their garment.⁴

- ⁷ Their eyes fairly bulge with fat and the schemes of their mind surpass reason.⁴
- 8 They mock and speak with offense; with utmost severity⁴ they speak.
- 9 Having set their mouths in the sky they parade their tongues on the earth.
- 10 [See note 5.]
- 11 They have said, "Who can know God? Can one comprehend The Most High?"
- ¹² See! These are wicked.
 In perpetual peace they grow wealthy.
- ¹³ I thoroughly cleansed my mind; I washed my hands in innocence,
- 14 but all day I remained infected, at morning—still plagued.4
- When I said, "I will talk about this," I misled a group of your sons.
- ¹⁶ I attempted to understand it but it seemed too hard for me.
- ¹⁷ So I go to the shrines of God to understand their meaning.
- Lo, you made them for something —then felled them to ruins!
- 19 Why were they suddenly abandoned, finished, closed in the crises?
- ²⁰ Like a dream that is ended, O Master, in the end⁴ you despise their images.

- ²¹ My mind is embittered; my thoughts, irritating.
- ²² I am so stupid, so ignorant!

 I am but a dumb brute before you.
- ²³ And yet I am always before you: you keep me in your hand.
- With counsel you lead me; you take me by the hand behind you.⁶
- ²⁵ I have but you in the heavens and nothing more on earth.
- ²⁰ My flesh and my brain may fail but my Rock, the desire of my mind,⁴ is God evermore.

CHOIR

- ²⁷ Those who avoid you will perish; you exterminate all those who stray.
- ²⁸ God's presence is good for me; I make The Lord my refuge and I will witness to his deeds.

PSALM 74

A maskil for Asaph.

This powerful lament was, of course, a reaction to the destruction of Jerusalem and must be dated between its fall and the building of the second temple.

CANTOR

Why do you continue to reject us, O God?
Why are you angered with the sheep of your pasture?

- ² Remember the group you purchased of old, the tribe you bought as your own and the hill of Zion where you camped!
- ³ Pick up your stride for the everlasting ruins!

 The foe has ruined everything in the temple.¹
- ⁴ Your ravagers have roared from within the court yards;

they have set up their banners as standards.

- ⁵ From the entrance and on they hacked down² the woodwork with axes
- ⁶ and then, on all the fine carving they hammered with hatchets and mallets.³
- They set your sanctuary on fire; they utterly destroyed your dwelling.
- 8 They said to themselves, "Let us ruin them completely!

Burn all God's courts to the ground!"4

CHOIR

- We cannot see our banners;there is no sign, no prophet.We have no one to tell us how long.
- 10 How long, O God, will the ravager scoff?

 Must the enemy continue to scorn your name?
- 11 Why does your hand remain idle, your arm in the midst of your bosom?

CANTOR

Yet God is my king from of old, who does saving acts in the course of Earth's history.⁵

- You once turned the sea with your power; you shattered the heads of the monsters. When the waters rose up
- 14 it was you who put down the heads of the dragon.
 You gave him as food to the beasts of the sea.
 7
- ¹⁵ It was you who split open the spring and the brook. You brought dry land, put the rivers in channels.

CHOIR

¹⁶ You possess both the day and the night: it was you who created light's source and the sun.

¹⁷ It was you who set up the seasons⁸ of Earth:

it was you who devised both summer and winter.

CANTOR

- ¹⁸ Recall this, O Lord, for the ravager has scoffed; a senseless people has scorned your name.
- ¹⁰ Do not let the beast take the life of your witness!⁹ Do not continue to abandon your needy.
- Pay regard to your covenant!
 Darkness has filled the land, violence the fields.
 10
- ²¹ May the suffering of the weak not return! Let the poor and afflicted give praise to your name!

CHOIR

- ²² Arise, O God! Contend your case!
 Recall how the senseless continually scoffed you!
- ²³ Forget not the voice of the ravagers!

 The pride of your foes has continually risen.

For the conclusion. Do not destroy. A psalm for Asaph. A song.

CHOIR

² We confess you, O God, we confess you, as we call on your name¹ and proclaim² your wonders.

CANTOR

- ³ I first choose the time, then I execute justice.
- ¹ The earth and all creatures may tremble but I make her pillars stand firm.

⁵ I say to the boastful, "Boast not!", to the wicked, "Do not be so haughty!

6 Do not be so high and so mighty,3 nor speak with such insolent pride!"4

CHOIR

- ⁷ Be they⁵ from east or from west, be they⁵ from south or from north,⁶
- 8 when God is the judge he both humbles and raises.
- The Lord has a cup and some wine,
 a skin full of fermented wine.
 He pours out, he drains to the dregs,
 and the wicked of Earth must all drink it.

CANTOR

¹⁰ As for me, I proclaim The Eternal One. I chant to the God of Jacob. Selah

¹¹ The wicked man's pride is cut down but the honor of the righteous is raised.

PSALM 76

For the conclusion. With strings. A psalm for Asaph. A song.

CANTOR

- ² God is known in Judah; his name is great in Israel.
- ³ His tent is in Shalem, ¹ his dwelling in Zion.
- ⁴ There he destroyed darting arrows,² shield and sword and battle.
- ⁵ More awsome³ are you, more majestic than high-soaring mountains.⁴
- 6 Stouthearted men are dismayed;5 no warrior can find his own strength.

CHOIR

- ⁷ At your rebuke, O God of Jacob, both chariot and horse are stunned.
- * How awesome you are!6
 Who can withstand your gaze?
- You sound forth decisions from Heaven.Earth is afraid: she is silent,
- when you rise for judgment, O God, to give help to the lowly of earth.
- ¹¹ Man's wrath must merely confess you. You take on his surplus of wrath.⁷

Selah

Selah

CANTOR

¹² Make vows to The Lord⁸ and fulfill them. Let all who come around bring a reverent gift.

¹³ He shortens the breath of leaders; he is feared by the kings of Earth.

PSALM 77

For the conclusion. Upon Yeduthun. For Asaph. A psalm.

- ² With my voice I cry out unto God, unto God with my voice, and he hears me.¹
- When I am in trouble I seek out The Master. I continually reach out my hand² but my spirit refuses comfort.
- ⁴ I think about God; I meditate. I think till my mind is tired.

Selah

- ⁵ You have kept my eyelids heavy.³ I am moved but unable to speak.
- ⁶ I consider the days of old, recalling the years of the past.
- ⁷ I muse⁴ through the night with my mind, examining and searching myself.
- 8 If The Master was spurned in the past will he ever again look with pleasure?
- ⁹ Will his kindness permanently cease? Will vision end for some generations?⁵
- Might God forget to be gracious, in anger close off his compassion?

- 11 Then I said, "This is what hurts me:0 that the arm of The Most High can change."
- ¹² Let me recall The Lord's acts, his wonders of old!⁷
- ¹³ I think about all your deeds, Considering what you have done.
- Your way is mysterious, O God!8 What god is as great as our God?
- You are The God, who does wonders.
 You made known your strength to the peoples.
- You redeemed your people with power, the sons of Jacob and Joseph.
- ¹⁷ The waters beheld you, O God; the waters beheld you and trembled. They shook, those primeval waters.
- 18 The waters poured down from the clouds as the cumulus uttered its voice and the lightning darted around.
- 19 As your thunder pealed from the sky[®] thunderbolts brightened the world and the earth fairly shook and trembled.
- You tread through the sea,¹⁰ your paths in the mighty waters, yet your tracks are not seen.
- ²¹ You led your people like sheep through the hands of Moses and Aaron.

A maskil for Asaph.

This hymn, which is really a great confession of faith in the form of a recital of God's activity in Israel's history, was written sometime after the fall of the North and perhaps before the fall of the South. We know that such credo-hymns were used at the Passover feast and perhaps at other festivals as well.

CANTOR

Hearken, my folk, to my teaching! Lend an ear to the words of my mouth!

- ² I would open my lips with a story and pour forth the secrets of old
- ³—things we have heard and have known, which our fathers have told us.
- ⁴ Things not concealed from their sons, for they tell them to each generation: the praises and power of The Lord, the wonders which he has performed,
- set up as a witness for Jacob, put down as instruction for Israel even as our fathers commanded, teaching their sons,
- that the next generation might know
 —sons yet to be born,
 who should rise and tell them to their sons
- ⁷ to build up their trust in God that they never forget God's deed, that they keep his commands,

- that they should not be like their fathers—a stubborn, rebellious generation, a generation with loyalty unfixed, whose mind was not set upon God.
- ⁹ The Ephraimites, armed with the bow, turned back in the day of battle.
- They did not keep God's covenant; they refused to follow his guidance.
- 11 They forgot his great deeds, the wonders which he had shown them.

CHOIR

- In the sight of their fathers he did a great deed —in the land of Egypt, the plain of Zoan.
- ¹³ He parted the sea to admit them,¹ made the waters stand off in retreat.²
- ¹⁴ He led them by day with a cloud, each night by the light of a fire.
- ¹⁵ He split open rocks in the desert, let them drink from the boundless deep,
- nade streams come out from the cliff, brought them down like rivers of water.

CANTOR

- ¹⁷ But they went on to sin against him, to provoke The Most High in that desert.
- ¹⁸ In their minds they mistrusted God, begging food for their lives.
- 19 They spoke against God.
 They said, "Is God able to spread out a table in the desert?"

CHOIR

²⁰ But lo, he struck rocks and they bubbled with water, with streams overflowing. And bread? He was able to give it, even furnishing meat for his people.

CANTOR

²¹ Therefore, The Lord took heed and was angered. A fire was kindled against Jacob. His wrath rose up against Israel

²² because they did not trust God nor believe in his saving power.

CHOIR

- ²³ He commanded the clouds from above; he opened the doorways of Heaven.
- ²⁴ He showered down manna for food; he gave them the bread of the heavens.
- 25 Men ate of the bread of the heroes, sustained on provisions he sent them.
- ²⁶ He sent the east wind from the heavens, led the south wind from his fortress
- ²⁷ and showered them with meat like dust, with fowl like the sand of the seas.
- ²⁸ They fell in the midst of the camp all around the encampments.
- ²⁹ So they ate and were well sustained; he had brought them the food that they craved.

CANTOR

30 So they ceased not their craving.
While the food was yet in their mouths

- 31 the anger of God rose against them. He killed the stoutest among them; he laid low the choice men of Israel.
- ³² But for all this, they sinned again: they would not believe in his wonders.
- ³³ So he ended their days without meaning, their years with dread terror.
- 34 Whenever he killed them they sought him: they returned and they looked for a god.
- 35 They remembered that God was their rock, that God The Most High had redeemed them.
- 36 But they tried to fool him with words; with their tongues they deceived him.
- ³⁷ Their minds were not steadfastly with him; they did not keep faith in his covenant.

CHOIR

But he is compassionate.
 He forgives³ and does not destroy.
 He is sure to revoke his anger and never stirs up all his wrath.
 He remembered that they were but flesh,

CANTOR

40 Yet how they rebelled in the desert, provoked him in the wasteland!

a passing wind that goes on.4

- ⁴¹ They turned and again tempted God, offended The Holy One of Israel.
- ¹² They did not remember his hand nor the day he redeemed them from slavery

⁴³—performing his signs down in Egypt, his wonders in the plain of Zoan.

CHOIR

- ⁺⁺ He turned their Nile into blood: they no longer could drink their streams.
- ⁴⁵ He sent in the gadfly to eat them, the frogs to destroy them.
- ⁴⁶ He gave to the locust their harvest, their crops to the insects.
- ⁴⁷ He killed their grapevines with hail, their sycamores with frost.⁵
- ⁴⁸ He exposed their cattle to hail, their stock to the lightning.
- 49 He let loose the fire of his anger
 - -fury and wrath and oppression!
 - -a delegation of angels destroying,
- ⁵⁰ preparing a path for his anger!

He did not spare them from death but committed their lives to the plague.

- ⁵¹ He struck all the firstborn of Egypt, the best from the tents of Ham.
- ⁵² He herded his people like sheep and led them like flocks to the desert.
- ⁵³ He guided them, safe, without fear, and covered their foes in the sea.
- ⁵⁴ He brought them to a land set apart, to this hill which was bought with his power.
- ⁵⁵ He drove out the nations before them and laid out the plots of inheritance.He settled in their tents the tribes of Israel.

CANTOR

- 50 But they tempted, defied The Most High: they would not keep his statutes.
- ⁵⁷ They turned and betrayed, like their fathers, snapped back like a treacherous bow.
- 58 They provoked him with hilltop shrines, with their idols, offended his rights.
- ⁵⁰ God heard and reacted with fury; he deeply abhorred Israel.
- 60 He abandoned his dwelling at Shiloh, the tent where he camped among men.
- ⁶¹ He gave up his strength for captivity, his glory to the hands of the foe.
- ⁶² He submitted his people to the sword, became furious at his own possession.
- ⁶³ The fire devoured its warriors.
 (No wedding songs for its maidens.)
- ⁶⁴ Its priests? They fell by the sword and the widows were not there to weep.

CHOIR

- ⁶⁵ Then The Master awoke from his sleep, like a hero aroused after wine.
- 60 He beat his enemies back; he gave them eternal reproach.
- ⁶⁷ He rejected the tent of Joseph; he chose not the staff of Ephraim.

- ⁶⁸ But he did choose the staff of Judah and the mount of Zion⁶ which he loves.
- 69 He built his sanctuary high; like the earth he made it eternal.
- ⁷⁰ He selected David his servant: he took him from following the sheep.
- 71 From tending the ewes he brought him to watch after Jacob, his people, after Israel, his possession
- 72 —and he watched with a dependable mind; with skill in his hands he led them.

A maskil for Asaph.

Toward the end of this lament, from about vs. 10 and on, any kind of meter is abandoned.

CHOIR

- O God, the nations have invaded your heritage, polluted your sacred temple and utterly destroyed Jerusalem!
- ² They have given your servants' bodies as food for the birds of the sky, the flesh of your saints for wild beasts.
- ³ They have poured out their blood, unburied, like water around Jerusalem.
- ⁴ We became the scorn of our neighbors, a reproach and a joke to those around us.

CANTOR

- ⁵ How long, O Lord? Will your anger continue, your wrath burn on like a fire?
- 6 Pour out your heat on the nations who do not know you, on the kingdoms that do not call on your name,
- 7 for they devoured Jacob, destroyed his homeland!
- ⁶ Do not hold our past sins against us! Quickly! Let your mercies draw near us! We are laid so low.
- 9 Help us, our saving God, for the glory of your name! Deliver us and cover our sins for the sake of your name!
- 10 Why should the nations be saying,
 "Where is their God?"
 - May vengeance for the outpoured blood of your servants

be shown to the nations before us!

- ¹¹ May the groans of the captives come before you!
 By the strength of your arm set free those destined to die
- ¹² and requite our neighbors with a sevenfold retribution

for the reproach which they hurled at you, Master!

CHOIR

We, your people, the sheep of your pasture, will confess you forever.
For conceptions we will speak forth your project.

For generations we will speak forth your praise.

For the conclusion. Upon shoshanim. A testimony for Asaph. A psalm.

This poignant prayer reflects the tragedy of the destruction of Jerusalem or some similar catastrophe.

CANTOR

- ² Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel! You, who lead Joseph like a flock, enthroned above cherubs, shine forth!
- ³ Before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up your power! Come forth and save us!

CHOIR

* Restore us, O God! Smile, that we may be saved!

CANTOR

- ⁵ O Lord of Armies,² how long will you smoke at the prayers of your people?
- ⁶ You have made them eat bread of sorrow; you have made them drink buckets of tears.
- ⁷ You have made us the scorn of our neighbors, while our enemies mock and deride us.

CHOIR

⁸ O Lord of Armies,³ restore us! Smile, that we may be saved!

CANTOR

- ⁹ You pulled out a vine down in Egypt, drove out nations and planted it.
- You cleared a way; you made it take root. It spread through the
- 11 its shade covered mountains with branches like cedar's.
- ¹² Its branches reached out to the sea, its vines to the river.
- ¹³ Why have you broken the fences that people who pass by may pluck it,
- 14 that pigs of the brushland break in, that beasts of the field can devour it?

CHOIR

¹⁵ O Lord of Armies,³ please turn! Look from the heavens and see! Look after this vine and repair it,

16 this vine which your own hand has planted, the stock⁴ of your own careful nurture.

CANTOR

- ¹⁷ It is burned in the fire like rubbish. Because you rebuked it, it perished.
- ¹⁸ Put your hand once again on your servant, on the man you have nurtured as yours!
- We will not deny you.
 Revive us! We will call on your name.

CHOIR

²⁰ O Lord of Armies,⁵ restore us! Smile, that we may be saved!

For the conclusion. Upon the gittith. For Asaph.

CHOIR

- ² Sing unto God, our strength! Shout to the God of Jacob!
- ³ Lift up a song, bring a timbrel, a sweet-sounding harp and a lyre!
- ⁴ Sound a festival blast on the shofar¹ in the monthly day of rejoicing,
- ⁵ for this is required of Israel, ordained by the God of Jacob,
- 6 the custom he established² for Joseph when he came from³ the land of Egypt.

CANTOR

From an unknown source I heard this:

- ⁷ "I have lifted the load from his shoulder, removed his hands from the basket.
- 8 When you cried in your trouble I freed you, responding in the mystery of thunder.
 I tried you at Meribah's waters.
- ⁹ Listen, my people, I charge you! You must obey, O Israel.
- There shall be no strange god among you; you shall bow down to no other gods,
- 11 for I, The Lord, am your God, who brought you from Egypt's land. Open your mouth! I will fill it.

- ¹² My people obeyed not my voice; Israel refused to be willing.
- ¹³ So I let them continue in stubbornness, go on with the things they decided.
- 14 If my people would listen to me, if Israel would walk in my ways,
- 15 how soon I would humble their foes and set my hand to their troubles!
- ¹⁶ The enemies of The Lord would cringe and ever remain in that state.
- ¹⁷ I would feed them the best of the wheat; from the rocks I would fill them with honey."

PSALM 82

A psalm for Asaph.

CANTOR

God has stood up in his council, passing judgment among the gods.

Why do you judge unjustly? Why let the wicked go free?

Selah

- Justify the weak, the fatherless!
 Vindicate the poor, the afflicted!
- Rescue the weak, the needy! Deliver from the hand of the wicked!

CHOIR

⁵ They know not; they understand nothing. They walk in the dark while Earth's foundations are trembling.

CANTOR

- 6 It was I who said you are gods every one of you—sons of The Highest.
- But now, like men, you shall die; like any other prince you shall fall.

CHOIR

8 Arise, O God, and govern the earth, for you now inherit all nations!

PSALM 83

song. A psalm for Asaph.

- ² O God, stay not silent!
 O God, be not deaf or dumb!
- ^a Behold, our foes are threatening! Our enemies have lifted their heads!
- ⁴ They make crafty plans for your people; they scheme for your treasuries,
- 5 saying, "Let us go and remove them as a nation! Let Israel be mentioned no more!"
- ⁶ United together, they counsel, forming an alliance against you
- T—the tents¹ of Edom and Ishmael, Moab and the Hagites,
- 8 Gebal,² Ammon and Amaleq, Philistia with the citizens of Tyre.
- ⁹ Even Ashur³ has joined up with them. (They provide strength for Lot's children.) Selah

- Treat them like Midian, like Sisera —like Yavin at the river Qishon!
- 11 (They were destroyed at En-dor; they became dung for the ground.)
- ¹² Make their nobles like Oreb and Ze-eb,⁴ their leaders like Zobah and Salmuna.
- ¹³ who said, "Let us take for ourselves the pastures of God!"
- ¹⁴ Make them, my God, like a whirlwind, like chaff in a breeze!
- Like fire consuming the brushland, like flames devouring the hills,
- 16 so chase them off with your tempest and make them afraid with your storm.
- ¹⁷ Fill their faces with shame, that they seek your name, O Lord!
- ¹⁸ Let them ever be shamed and confounded! Dismayed, may they perish!
- ¹⁹ Let them know that you, that your name alone, O Lord, is above all the earth as The Highest!

PSALM 84

For the conclusion. On the gittith. For the sons of Qoraḥ. As psalm.

This could be called a pilgrimage hymn. It expresses the dreams and desires of those who were planning or undertaking a journey to God's temple for the celebration of a festival.

CANTOR

² How pleasant are your encampments, O Lord of Armies! ³ My spirit has longed, yes, yearned for the courts of The Lord. My mind and my flesh sing out to The Living God.

4 Even the bird finds a home,

the swallow a nest,
where she may hatch her young ones:
your altar, O Lord of Armies,
my King, my God.

CHOIR

⁵ Happy are the residents of your house! They praise you forever.¹

Selah

- 6 [See note 2.]
- ⁷ Traveling through the valley of Baca, they drink³ from a spring.
 Showers cover it with rain.⁴
 ⁸ They proceed with increasing strength as they look⁵ unto God in Zion.

CANTOR

O God, Lord of Armies, listen to my prayer!
 Give ear, O God of Jacob!
 Selah
 Behold our shield, O God!

CHOIR

11 A day in your courts is better than a thousand in any other;8 standing at the door of God's house, than a lifetime in tents of the wicked.

Look favorably at your anointed!7

CANTOR

Yes, The Lord is a sun and shield,
 giving mercy and honor.
 The Lord withholds nothing good from men of integrity.

Choir

¹³ O Lord of Armies, happy is the man who trusts you!

PSALM 85

For the conclusion. For the sons of Qorah. A psalm.

This psalm seems to be self-contradictory. The first stanza speaks as though salvation has been accomplished, as though the exiles have returned to their land. In the very next stanza, however, the people pray for restoration. We suggest that this may reflect the message of Second Isaiah and be dated to the same period. The announcement of forgiveness has been given but the return to Canaan has not yet taken place.

CANTOR

- ² You have favored your land, O Lord: you removed the captivity of Jacob.
- ³ You have lifted the guilt of your people; you have covered all of their sins.

 Selah
- ⁴ You have withdrawn all your wrath; you have turned from the heat of your anger.

CHOIR

⁵ Restore us, our saving God! Remove your vexation against us!

- ⁶ Must you ever be angry at us, unceasingly pour out your wrath?
- ⁷ Can you not restore us again that your folk may rejoice for your sake?¹
- 8 Show us, O Lord, your kindness! Grant us your help!

CANTOR

- 9 Let me hear what God, The Lord, has to say, for he is speaking of peace—to his people, to those who are faithful.² Let them not turn to folly!³
- ¹⁰ His help is there for his worshippers that his honor may dwell in our land.
- ¹¹ Kindness and faithfulness have met; justice and peace have kissed.
- ¹² Faithfulness sprouts from the ground as justice looks down from the sky.

CHOIR

- ¹³ The Lord can provide what is good; he can grant to our land its produce.
- 14 Righteousness walks on before him as he plants his steps on the road.

PSALM 86

prayer for David.

Incline your ear, Lord, and answer me, for I am afflicted and needy!

- Guard my life: I am faithful.
 Give help to your servant who trusts you.
- ³ Have mercy, O Master, my God, for to you I continually cry!
- ⁴ Give joy to the life of your servant, for to you, O Master, I dedicate my life!¹
- ⁵ You, O Master, are good and forgiving, pouring kindness on those who cry out.
- ⁶ Listen, O Lord, to my prayer!
 Give heed to the sound of my plea!
- ⁷ I call you when I am in trouble, for you answer me.
- 8 There is no god like you, O Master and nothing like your deeds.
- Let the² nations you made come forward! Let them bow down before you, O Master, and honor your name!
- You are great: a worker of wonders. You alone are true God.
- ¹¹ Teach me your ways, O Lord: I would walk in your truth. Inspire³ my mind to worship your name.
- ¹² I would praise you, O Master, my God, with all my heart,

and honor your name forever!

You have shown great kindness to me.
You delivered my life from Deathland below.

- Proud men rise against me, O God.
 A violent crew seeks my life
 —men who do not respect you.
- ¹⁵ But you, O Master, compassionate, merciful God,⁴ patient, most faithful and kind,
- Give strength to your servant!

 Help your poor son!
- 17 Show me a sign of some good! Let my foes in disappointment behold that you, Lord, are my help and my comfort!

For the sons of Qorah. A psalm. A song.

The text of this psalm is so corrupt that any translation must be highly conjectural. We claim no special merit for ours. The theme of the psalm, as far as we can determine it: of all the cities that have been known as God's, Jerusalem, with Mt. Zion in its midst, surpasses them all.

The Lord,¹ whose home
is the mountains of Qadesh,
² has more love for Zion's gateways
than all of the dwellings of Jacob.²
³ Most honored of all
is the city of God.

Selah

⁴ I recall Rahab; I know about Babel Behold, now, Philistia and Tyre or Cush.³ Are these his origin?⁴

- 5 But Zion: any man will say, "He comes from there. He, The Most High, has built it."
- ⁶ They say of The Lord in the record of peoples: this is his origin.

Selah

PSALM 88

A song. A psalm for the sons of Qoraḥ. For the conclusion. Upon maḥlath le'anoth. A maskil for Heman the Ezrahite.

- ² O Lord, my God, I have called by day, ¹ cried out in the night before you.
- ³ My prayer invades your presence. Lend an ear to my ringing cry!
- ⁴ My soul is sated with trouble; I approach the gates of death.
- ⁵ I am numbered with those who descend. I become like a man without strength,
- ⁶ gone with the dead,²
 like the slain who lie in the grave,
 of whom there is no more remembrance,
 for now they are out of your reach.³
- ⁷ You have lowered me into the grave, to a darkened place in the depths.⁴
- ⁸ You have laid your wrath upon me; with its waves you overwhelm me.⁵
- You have sent my friends away; you have made me abominable to them.

Selah

I am bound; I cannot get out.⁶
¹⁰ My eyes languish from misery.

I continually call you, O Lord;
I spread out my hands before you.⁷

11 Can you do a wonder for the dead? Can the ghosts get up and praise you?

- ¹² Can your kindness be confessed in the grave, your faithfulness in Hell?
- 13 Can your wonder be perceived in the darkness, your triumph in the land of oblivion?
- ¹⁴ But I cry to you, Lord; at morning my prayer comes before you.⁸
- Why, O Lord, do you cast me away? Why do you hide your face from me?
- 16 [See note 9.]
- ¹⁷ Your fury has come against me. Your terrors put me to silence.
- 18 They continually swamp me like water, and gather around me together.
- 19 You drive my loved ones away and hide my friends in the darkness.

PSALM 89

A maskil for Ethan the Ezrahite.

This is one of the so-called enthronement psalms.

CHOIR

² I will always sing of The Lord's kind deeds. I will always proclaim his faithfulness.¹

³ I will say, "The world was made by your kindness and your faithfulness set up the heavens."

CANTOR

- ⁴ I made a promise to my choice, an agreement with David, my servant:
- I permanently establish your line;I have built your throne to endure.

Selah

CHOIR

- ⁶ The heavens confess your splendor, O Lord, your faithfulness, in the holy assembly.
- ⁷ Who, in the clouds, can compare to The Lord? Which of the gods is like him
- 8 —most awesome of the holy assembly?
 He is great, more fearsome, than all those around him!
- ⁹ Who is like you, O Lord of Armies?²
 Which rival so faithful or kind?³

CANTOR

- You are the ruler of the swells of the seas: when its waves rise up you make them be still.
- 11 It was you who crushed the dragon to death: with your powerful arm you scattered your foes.
- You own the heavens and also the earth.
 It was you who set up the world and its contents.
- ¹³ North and south,⁴ you created them all. Tabor and Hermon⁵ sing out to your name.
- You possess power and strength.
 Your hand is raised high in its might.⁶

¹⁵ Justice and right are the base of your throne; kindness and truth meet in your presence.

CHOIR

- ¹⁶ Happy are those who can shout⁷ as they walk in your favor, O Lord!
- 17 They continue to dance in your honor and extol your prevailing right.
- You are the pride of their strength as you lift us up in your pleasure.8
- Our shield belongs to The Lord, our king to The Holy One of Israel.

CHOIR

- There was a time when you spoke to your saints through a vision and said:
 - I preferred a young man to a warrior, exalted youth above strength.¹⁰
- David I choose as my servant; with my holy oil I anoint him.
- My hand shall establish his people; my arm shall give him strength.
- No foe shall defeat him;
- I will level his enemies before him and strike those who hate him.
- My sustenance and favor are with him. Because of me he exults.
- I give him control of the elemental powers.¹¹
- He calls out, "You are my Father, my God and my Saving Strength."

- It was I who appointed him firstborn, highest of all Earth's kings.
- I promised him kindness forever; my covenant with him is sure.
- I destine his seed to endure, his throne to be eternal.
- 31 If his subjects forsake my teaching or ignore my ways,
- if they flaunt my rules or forget my commands,
- I encounter their rebellion with authority, their guilt with plagues.
- 34 I will not change the kindness I owe him nor pervert my faithfulness.
- 35 I will not break my covenant nor change what my lips have uttered.
- Once I have sworn by my holiness.

 I will not deceive David.
- His seed shall endure forever; his throne shall persist like the sun.¹³
- Like the moon, it is made to endure, like the mist which remains in the clouds.

CHOIR

- ³⁹ But now you have spurned and rejected, shown anger against your anointed,
- ⁴⁰ renounced your covenant with him and dirtied his crown in the dust.
- ⁴¹ You have broken down all his defences and made his walled city a ruin.
- ⁴² Travelers have stopped to take plunder. He is the scorn of his neighbors.

- ⁴³ You have lifted the hand of his foes; you have made all his enemies happy.
- ⁴⁴ You turned his sword back upon him;¹⁴ you did not sustain him in battle.
- ⁴⁵ You have taken his scepter away¹⁵ and cast his throne to the ground.
- ⁴⁶ You have shortened the days of his vigor and covered him over with shame.

Selah

⁴⁷ How long, O Lord, will you hide? How long will your anger burn on?

CANTOR

- ⁴⁸ Remember, O Master, the weakness, ¹⁶ the substance you used to make man!
- ⁴⁹ Could one expect that a man should not die, that his life should be spared by death?
- 50 Where is that faithful love, Master, which you swore to maintain for David?
- ⁵¹ Consider, O Master, the plight of your servants! I bear in my bosom the scorn of all people,¹⁷
- ⁵² that which your foes use to taunt you, O Lord, with which they have taunted behind your anointed.¹⁸

CHOIR

53 Blessed be the Lord forever. Amen. Amen.

NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE NOTES

Dahood, ANB Psalms-1, Introduction, Translation and Notes by Mitchell Dahood. ("The Anchor Bible.") Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966. A second volume. Psalms-II by Dahood has been published in 1968.

Psalms-III is yet to be published.

Gk Septuaginta, Edited by Alfred Rahlfs, 2 vols, Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1952. This is the Greek version of the Old Testament from Alex-

andria

Heb Biblia Hebraica, Edited by Rudolf Kittel, Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1954. This is the

Masoretic text of the Hebrew Old Testament.

Any of the Syriac versions available; our source has Syr been chiefly the critical apparatus of Kittel's Biblia

Hebraica.

Any of the Targum texts available; our source has Targ been chiefly the critical apparatus of Kittel's Biblia

Hehraica

HOPsa The Psalms Scroll of Oumran Cave 11. Edited by I. A. Sanders. ("Discoveries in the Judaean Desert

of Jordan," Vol. LV.) Oxford: Oxford University

Press. 1965.

NOTES TO PSALMS 42-89

PSALM 42

- 1. We amend bsk 'ddm to bskt wdrm. The text permits this easily, for in paleo-Hebrew script a defective 'aleph could be mistaken for a tau, while the resh and the daleth have always been so similar as to cause confusion. We only add the conjunctive waw. We are moved to this emendation by the fact that the combination of the verb 'br with the preposition b- is usually followed by a noun or name designating a place. There was more than one ancient site called Succoth. We would suggest, as one possibility, the village of this name which was located west of Penuel on the river Jabbok, just east of Jordan. Another possibility would be to read the text as "Soko (sk') of the south." Pre-exilic Hebrew scribes would have spelled Soco as skh.
- 2. The Hebrew idiom is obscure. Literally, it reads, "(the) salvation of my face."
- 3. The Heb is a bit obscure and perhaps corrupt.
- 4. Perhaps a name for one of the peaks of Mt. Hermon.
- 5. The texts do not all agree here. Some old Gk manuscripts read "he reveals it" for "his song is with me."

PSALM 43

1. We follow the Gk here.

- We are forced to lengthen the lines to capture their full meaning in vs. 3.
- We have deleted one occurrence of tsymnw and altered word order for translation purposes only. "Object of scorn" is literally, "wagging of the head."
- 3. Literally, "all this you brought us."
- 4. Perhaps a specific geographical location.
- This term (slmwt) also appears in Psalm 23:4. It may also be a specific geographical location.

- 1. We delete the second occurrence of whark as dittography.
- 2. The Heb is corrupt. We follow the Gk in part.
- 3. We delete 'lhyk as an alternate to 'lhym.
- 4. Our translation is interpretive. Literally, "oil of joy."
- 5. The accent is on the last syllable of Ophir. This entire stanza is somewhat obscure in the Heb. We give a rather free translation.

PSALM 46

 We add one stress to the line to preserve its meaning. We are not convinced that our translation is correct here and suggest Dahood's translation in ANB as an alternate. It reads, "the river and its channels stand in a heap."

PSALM 47

- 1. We delete the second occurrence of 'lhym in this verse.
- 2. Here we follow Dahood's translation in rendering 'm as "mighty" and mgn as "lord" (suzerain). We find a different solution to ky l'lhym mgny 'rs, which seems to say quite clearly, "for the suzerains of earth are God's."

PSALM 48

- 1. The Heb is obscure here.
- The Hebrews pronounced this tsee-on, with the accent on the last syllable.
- Literally, "remote places of the north." Ugaritic literature suggests that in Canaanite lore this may have been considered the center of the earth.
- 4. We delete sim for translation purposes. No matter what its precise meaning (hardly "there" in this instance!), it is adverbial and merely strengthens the meaning of words already present.

- Another alternative would be to take the form hgwt as an archaic verb form, as Dahood does, and read "my heart shall utter wise things."
- 2. Surely 'h cannot mean "brother" here. It must be some kind of interjection.
- 3. We follow the Gk here.
- We follow Dahood's suggestion in translating ksl as "wealth," though it lacks documentation.

- 5. The Heb text for vs. 15 is very corrupt. We are unable even to offer a suggestion for an intelligible reading beyond the first two lines. Hence we omit them.
- 6. We are tempted to continue in the third person, but the second person pronouns are in the Heb text as our translation indicates.
- 7. Compare Ecclesiastes 3:19-22.

PSALM 50

- 1. Whole burnt offerings.
- 2. Literally, "swarm."
- The Heb text is obscure in this line. The combination, hywt 'hyh, makes no sense as it stands. We omit "to me" for metrical reasons

PSALM 51

- 1. We omit "God" for metrical reasons.
- 2. We follow Dahood in translating dmym as "idols."
- 3. This line would seem to date the postscript to the time of the Exile and the rest of the psalm, in turn, to an earlier date.

PSALM 52

- 1. We omit two words (or one?) in the Heb text because they are too obscure to translate.
- 2. We add one stress to the line to capture its full meaning.
- 3. Literally, "forever and ever."

PSALM 53

 All four of these lines are corrupt beyond translation in this version of the psalm. Our translation is highly hypothetical.

PSALM 54

1. Or "insolent men," if we emend zrym to zdym.

- The Heb is too corrupt to translate. We furnish a word on the basis of a reasonable guess.
- 2. Or, "in their homes." We take bmgwrm and bqrbm to be alternates in the text.
- 3. The Heb is obscure and perhaps corrupt.
- 4. Literally, "with me." The Heb is obscure and perhaps corrupt.

- 5. Or, "afflict them."
- 6. The Heb is obscure and at least somewhat corrupt in these three lines
- 7. The Heb is unclear. Our translation is free.
- 8. The Heb is somewhat unclear.
- 9. We follow the Gk.
- 10. Or, "complete."
- 11. We follow Dahood here.
- 12. We add one stress to the line to retain its meaning.

 Here is the first major conflation. We have chosen to give a translation of what may have been one version. The alternate version would have been as follows:

Pity me, O God!

A man continually gasps at me;
a warrior oppresses me.
On the day that I fear (?)
I look unto God
and rejoice in his word.

- 2. We delete *dbry* simply because it makes no sense in this context. This, too, may represent some conflation.
- 3. Here is the second major conflation. Again, we have chosen to translate what may have been one version. The other version may have read as follows:

I rejoice in the Lord. I trust in God, etc.

- 1. Perhaps gmr should be emended to gml. "The Highest" is after Dahood's frequent rendering of 'ly as such.
- 2. We follow the Gk.
- 3. We follow the Gk.
- 4. The Heb is difficult here. We have had to give a precative force to the perfect verb in order to arrive at a sensible translation within the rules of parallelism. We suspect that more information about the root kpp would lead us to a better translation.
- 5. Or possible, "at dawn."

PSALM 58

- 1. Compare mā'os in Lamentations 3:34.
- 2. That is, cut off from society, outcasts. We emend hey to read hwsy and take the -y to be an archaic genitive ending.
- Our understanding of vs. 10 is too uncertain to permit translation. Compare RSV, which makes no sense in the context.

PSALM 59

- 1. We follow Dahood in our translation of 'nsy dmym.
- 2. We delete 'lhym as an alternate to yhwh.
- 3. We emend hrbwt to hrpwt as suggested by Kittel in Biblia Hebraica.
- 4. We emend 'smrh to 'syrh (or to 'zmrh with the Syr).
- Perhaps we should translate 3kh as "shrivel" with Dahood and read the 'l as a precative particle, for our translation does not fit the context well.
- "Chief" is a free rendering of mgn, which Dahood convincingly renders as "suzerain."
- 7. "Them" is not in the Heb.

PSALM 60

- 1. Literally, "your people."
- 2. We translate 'nn as "triumph" after Dahood's rendering of it in other instances.
- 3. Or, "my chief fortress."
- 4. Compare Ruth 4:7 for the meaning of the casting of the sandal. As the text stands it appears as though the battle is for the conquest of Edom. One should know, however, that "Edom" and "Aram" are practically identical in Hebrew consonantal script.

- "Earth" must be understood as the place of the dead in this context.
- Literally, "a rock that towers above me," though the Heb is slightly unclear and could be read, "Lift me on a rock (and) lead me."
- 3. With Dahood we render the verbs as precative perfects here, though we suggest that a modal translation ("can, should") might be more appropriate. The whole problem of modalism needs further study in Hebrew.

 "Due them" is interpretive. A literal rendering of this line would read, "you give the heritage of the worshippers of your name."

PSALM 62

- 1. Some manuscripts read, "on neginoth."
- 2. We follow the reading of vs. 6 here.
- The Heb is obscure in vss. 4-5a. One word appears nowhere else in Hebrew literature and, hence, its meaning is completely unknown. Our translation is highly conjectural.
- 4. An alternative reading:

God The Most High is my help and my glory. The rock of my strength, my refuge, is God.

5. We follow the Gk.

PSALM 63

- The original Hebrew word here seems to have been corrupted.
 We supply a reasonable conjecture.
- 2. In old Canaanite lore this is a holy area.
- 3. Literally, "lift up my hands."
- 4. That is, if he had reason to recall—if there were some saving act to remember.
- 5. Literally, "my soul clings after you."
- 6. The Heb is partially obscure in this line.

PSALM 64

- The Heb is not entirely clear here. We follow Dahood in translating hsm dbr mr as "poisonous arrows."
- 2. The Heb is somewhat unclear to us.

- The Heb reads "me." An emendation to the plural causes little difficulty from the standpoint of paleography.
- 2. We add one stress to the line to retain its meaning.
- 3. We read nsb'h as a niph'al. The -h can be deleted or understood as a precative ending.
- 4. We follow Dahood in translating 'nn as "triumph."
- 5. This line may be an alternate to "swell of the seas" or to the line which follows.

- This line may be either an alternate to "the swell of its waves" or a later addition to the text.
- 7. The Heb is unclear and perhaps corrupt.

PSALM 66

- 1. The Heb is slightly corrupt. We partially clarify the passage by emending *symw* to *syrw*.
- 2. The Heb is somewhat unclear.
- 3. The Heb seems to be corrupt. We emend sim nsmhh to smh nsmhh.
- 4. We follow the Gk.
- 5. We omit "to you" for metrical reasons.
- 6. The Heb is somewhat unclear to us.

PSALM 67

1. The Heb reads "your."

- 1. Literally, "build up."
- We suspect that this may not be the meaning of the Hebrew term at all (it is the accepted meaning) or that the Heb may be corrupt.
- 3. In Ugaritic literature this term seems to refer to a group of female singers or priestesses of some sort.
- 4. We translate "select ones" on the basis of the apparent meaning of the use of this term in Ugaritic literature and from Phoenician srsr.
- 5. Perhaps a flat, shiny pavement around an altar.
- 6. We delete the first occurrence of 'lhym.
- 7. The word translated "messengers" is feminine in gender!
- 8. Dahood takes yddwn to mean "prostrate themselves" here.
- 9. The writer is likely referring to the pair of winged creatures in the inner sanctuary of the temple. The term we have rendered as "dinine protection" is shephatayim, which may be one of the names for these creatures. The Heb is unclear throughout vss. 12-14.
- 10. There must be some mythical lore behind this, which would in turn suggest that "the kings" may really have been deities.
- 11. "Bashan" should be accented on the second syllable.
- The Heb is somewhat unclear to us. We arbitrarily take šn'n to be a proper noun.

- 13. We have followed Dahood here, which has necessitated an emendation of 'dny bm to 'dny ybm.
- 14. The Heb is too unclear to translate with any degree of confidence. Our translation is conjectural.
- 15. The exact meaning of the Hebrew term is not known.
- 16. We follow the Gk, Targ, and Syr in part. The Heb is quite unclear. Compare ANATH in Ugaritic mythology for this image. The action of bathing in blood—the blood of victims—was part of a ritual of victory.
- 17. The meaning of the Hebrew term is somewhat uncertain.
- 18. The Heb is somewhat unclear to us.
- 19. Or, "those coming."
- The text is very unclear in vs. 31. "Wild beast" is based on "beast of the canefield." Our translation is highly conjectural throughout.
- 21. The meaning of himnym is unknown. We simply follow RSV.
- 22. Cush is Ethiopia.
- 23. We follow the Gk.

- The Heb is not entirely clear here, but what it seems to say implies a rather specific false accusation.
- 2. The Gk reads sunékampsa.
- 3. The Heb is somewhat unclear. We give a very free translation.
- 4. Literally, "let it be a time of acceptance, O God."
- 5. The metrical divisions are somewhat unclear in this verse.
- 6. The Heb is somewhat unclear here.

PSALM 71

- 1. Or, with some manuscripts, "fortress."
- 2. We follow the Gk.
- 3. The meaning of the Hebrew term is uncertain.
- 4. We omit "you" for metrical reasons.
- 5. We paraphrase these lines for clarity.
- 6. The Heb is a bit obscure, perhaps due to a conflate text.
- 7. We alter the word order for translation purposes only.

- 1. We read the singular with the Syr.
- We read the *lamed* as a vocative particle, which seems to fit the context, but also gives us two unusual names for God.

- 3. We read the *kaph* as a vocative particle, a function quite apparently possible for most Hebrew prepositions. The alternative, "descend *like* showers . . . ," hardly makes sense.
- 4. We parse yprh as a hiph'il.
- 5. The Heb is somewhat unclear.
- 6. Our translation is conjectural, for the Heb is unclear. The Gk reads sterigma (settlement?).
- 7. We are unsure of the meaning of ynyn.
- 8. Perhaps "God" should be deleted as merely an alternate reading for yhwh.
- 9. That is, "so be it, so be it!"

PSALM 73

- 1. The Heb is somewhat unclear.
- 2. Literally, "is fat."
- 3. Or, "pride is their necklace."
- 4. The Heb is unclear.
- 5. The Heb is so unclear that we omit vs. 10.
- 6. We emend 'hr kbwd to 'hrk byd. A change from yod to waw is most natural for certain periods of the Hebrew script.

PSALM 74

- 1. The Heb text is somewhat unclear in 3b. Another possibility: "yes, to destroy the foe in the temple" (reading kl as kī l²-).
- 2. We emend ywd' to ygd'.
- 3. The Heb is slightly obscure here.
- 4. Or, "they burned all God's courts in the land."
- 5. Literally, "in the midst of the earth."
- In Hebrew, "Leviathin," who is one of the personifications of the powers of the primeval waters or chaos.
- 7. Reading I'mlsy ym for I'm lsyym. "Beasts" is a conjectural trans-
- 8. Or, "boundaries."
- 9. We follow the Gk.
- 10. Or, "the dark corners of earth are full of haughtiness and violence." We emend the text, reading k as the suffix to b'rith rather than as ki.

- 1. We emend warwb smk to nar' bsmk.
- 2. We emend sprw to nspr.

- 3. Literally, "do not lift up your horn on high."
- 4. Or, "or speak against the Rock with insolence."
- 5. We read lw for l'.
- 6. Literally, "mountains" (for "north").

- 1. Shalem is a shorter form of the name Jerusalem.
- 2. The Heb is somewhat unclear to us.
- We follow Theodotion and Targ. The Heb reads, "brilliant," the Gk, "you shine."
- 4. "High-soaring" is purely conjectural.
- 5. The word translated "dismayed" is unclear in Hebrew.
- 6. The Heb is somewhat unclear. We delete one occurrence of "von."
- 7. The Heb is unclear to us.
- 8. We have taken "your God" as an alternate to yhwh.

PSALM 77

- 1. The Heb is slightly corrupt.
- Literally, "my hand is before him at night and it does not grow numb."
- 3. The Heb is somewhat unclear.
- 4. We follow the Gk.
- 5. The Heb is somewhat unclear. We follow the Gk in part and delete 'mr.
- 6. Literally, "this is my wounding."
- The Heb has "your" for "his." We also delete the second occurrence of 'zkr.
- 8. One could also read (with Dahood), "your power is in the sanctuary."
- 9. Literally, "the sound of your thunder in the vault" (reading glgl as "vault" with Dahood).
- 10. Literally, "your way is in the sea."

- 1. Literally, "and let them pass through."
- 2. Or, "stand up as if in a heap."
- 3. Literally, "he covers guilt."
- 4. Literally, "does not return."
- 5. We follow the Gk.
- 6. The accent is on the last syllable.

PSALM 80

- I. We emend 7 to 7.
- 2. We delete 'lhym as an alternate to yhwh.
- 3. We emend 'lhym to yhwh.
- 4. The Hebrew term is uncertain. Perhaps the text is corrupt.
- 5. We delete 'lhym as an alternate to yhwh.

PSALM 81

- 1. The shofar was an ancient trumpet-like instrument made from a ram's horn.
- 2. The Heb is somewhat unclear.
- 3. We follow the Gk.
- 4. Literally, "troublers."

PSALM 83

- 1. The scroll from Masada reads "gods."
- 2. "Gebal" is Byblos.
- 3. Assyria.
- 4. "Ze-eb" has two syllables, with a short "e" in each and the accent on the first.

PSALM 84

- 1. The Heb is somewhat unclear.
- 2. Verse 6 is omitted because the Heb text is too corrupt to translate. In some Phoenician texts the term mslt is a unit of measure.
- 3. Other alternatives: "he sends them" or "they make it a spring."
- 4. In late Hebrew, "teacher." We follow the Gk here.
- 5. We emend yr'h to yr'w.
- 6. Perhaps an alternate to yhwh sb'wt.
- "Our shield" and "the anointed" are both references to the Davidic king.
- 8. The Hebrew term is too corrupt to translate. Our translation is conjectural.
- 9. We delete 'lhym.

- I. Literally, "in you."
- 2. The Gk reads, "to those who turn their hearts to him."
- 3. Or, "to those who turn in confidence."

- 1. Literally, "lift up my soul."
- 2. We omit "all" for metrical reasons.
- 3. Our translation is somewhat uncertain.
- 4. We add one stress to the line to preserve its meaning.

PSALM 87

- 1. We supply "The Lord." The Heb begins with "his dwelling."
- 2. The "dwellings" referred to are perhaps ancient shrines.
- 3. "Cush" is Ethiopia.
- 4. The Heb almost defies translation. A more literal, but far from adequate, translation would be, "(was) this born there?"
- 5. Literally, "was born."
- This is identical to the last line of vs. 4, which we translated as a question.
- 7. Verse 7 is so unclear as to defy any attempt at translation. It is impossible to make consistent sense of the words that appear to be clearly there.

PSALM 88

- 1. We emend ysw'ty to sw'ty and read ywmm with the Targ.
- 2. The Hebrew word is untranslatable. What appears to be its meaning ("free") does not fit the context.
- 3. Literally, "snatched from your hand."
- 4. Literally, "in dark places, in depths."
- 5. The Heb is somewhat unclear.
- 6. The Heb is somewhat unclear.
- 7. The ancient Hebrew gesture of prayer.
- 8. Or, "my prayer rises quickly before you."
- 9. We omit vs. 16 because the text is too corrupt to translate. It says something about being needy and expiring.

- The first two lines are somewhat corrupt and unclear. We partially emend the text to get this translation. Heb has "your." "His" is found in the Gk.
- 2. We omit 'lhy.
- 3. The Heb is unclear in this line.
- 4. We could have rendered "north and south" as proper nouns: "Saphon and Yamin."
- 5. The names of two mountain peaks.

- 6. Literally, "you strengthen your hand; you raise your right arm."
- 7. Literally, "those who know the festal shout."
- 8. Or, "by your will."
- 9. In royal psalms, such as this is, the reference to the king as God's "shield" or "suzerain" (if we follow Dahood) is common. The shield may well have been a symbol of authority and this authority was designated to the Davidic king by God.
- 10. We follow Dahood in rendering 'm as "strength."
- 11. Literally, "I put his hand in the sea, his arm in the rivers."
- 12. Literally, "rock of my salvation."
- 13. Literally, "his throne is like the sun before me."
- 14. The Heb is slightly unclear, perhaps corrupt.
- 15. The Heb is somewhat corrupt.
- 16. We emend 'ny to 'dny. The Heb is somewhat unclear.
- 17. The Heb is unclear.
- 18. The Heb is somewhat unclear throughout vs. 52.

TEXT: 11 on 13 and 10 on 11 Intertype Garamond DISPLAY: Garamont PAPER: Supple Offset

The Psalms in Modern Speech

For Public and Private Use

translated by RICHARD S. HANSON

Volume 1—Introduction and Psalms 1-41 Volume 2—Psalms 42-89 Volume 3—Psalms 90-150

In rendering the Psalter usable both in group and private worship, this remarkable translation of the Book of Psalms also makes a solid contribution to scholarship.

The Psalms are divided into meaningful groups of two or more verses, with instructions for responsive reading by the Cantor, Choir I, and Choir II. The author has followed the meter and captured the movement of the Hebrew poetry. He has divided each Psalm for responsive reading in a way intended by the Hebrew rubrics. This system, together with the striking limpidity of the translation, provides the reader with a greater insight into the Psalms, and makes this book a valuable addition to the congregation's worship materials. The Introduction in Volume 1 is a thorough statement which introduces the non-specialist to the role of the Psalms in Old Testament life, to the linguistic problems of translation, and to the enriching possibilities which the Psalms offer to contemporary worship. Helpful notes are included at the end of each volume.

Richard S. Hanson is a member of the faculty of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa. His doctoral work was done at Harvard University.

cover art by Tom Irons

FORTRESS PRESS PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19129

\$1.95 each, \$5.50 a set

FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE USE

PSALMS IN MODERN SPEECH

Translated by Richard S. Hanson

VOLUME 3
PSALMS 90-150

Volume 3

FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE USE

BY RICHARD S. HANSON
VOLUME 3 PSALMS 90–150

FORTRESS PRESS PHILADELPHIA

© 1968 BY FORTRESS PRESS

Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 68-29463

Printed in the United States of America

6091C68 1- 1030



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Psalm 90	1	Psalm 121 67
Psalm 91	2	Psalm 122 68
Psalm 92	4	Psalm 123 69
Psalm 93	5	Psalm 124 70
Psalm 94	6	Psalm 125 71
Psalm 95	8	Psalm 126 72
Psalm 96	9	Psalm 127 73
Psalm 97	11	Psalm 128 74
Psalm 98	12	Psalm 129 75
Psalm 99	13	Psalm 130 76
Psalm 100	15	Psalm 131 77
Psalm 101	15	Psalm 132 77
Psalm 102	17	Psalm 133 79
Psalm 103	19	Psalm 134 80
Psalm 104	22	Psalm 135 80
Psalm 105	25	Psalm 136 83
Psalm 106	28	Psalm 137 88
Psalm 107	33	Psalm 138 89
Psalm 108	36	Psalm 139 90
Psalm 109	38	Psalm 140 92
Psalm 110	40	Psalm 141 94
Psalm 111	41	Psalm 142 95
Psalm 112	42	Psalm 143 96
Psalm 113	43	Psalm 144 97
Psalm 114	44	Psalm 145 99
Psalm 115	45	Psalm 146 102
Psalm 116	47	Psalm 147 103
Psalm 117	49	Psalm 148 105
Psalm 118	49	Psalm 149 107
Psalm 119	53	Psalm 150 108
Psalm 120	65	Notes 113

An Introduction to The Psalms in Modern Speech is to be found in Volume 1, Page 1.

A prayer for Moses, man of God.

CHOIR

You have been our abode, O Master, through all generations.

² Before the mountains were born, before the earth was begun,¹ from beginning to end you are God.

CANTOR

- ³ You send man back to the dust and say, "Return, O mortal!"
- ⁴ A thousand years in your sight seem like a day that is past, like a watch in the night.
- 5 [See note 2.]
- ⁶ In the morning they blossom and flourish; at evening they wither and die.

CHOIR

- We are stopped by your anger, dismayed by your wrath.
- * You look in the face of our guilt; you stare at the things we hide.
- ⁹ Our days are consumed by your movement: our years fade out like a sigh.

¹⁰ For seventy years we live, and if, by our strength, we reach eighty, they are all worthless and vain, for they fly away so quickly.

CANTOR

- 11 Who senses your anger or respects your wrath?3
- 12 Teach us to value our days that we may learn to act wisely.
- ¹³ Turn back soon, O Lord! Have mercy upon your servants!
- ¹⁴ Treat us to your kindness tomorrow! Make us joyful and happy forever!
- ¹⁵ Give us as many years of joy as the sadness we have already seen!
- 16 Reveal your activity to your servants, your splendor to your sons!

CHOIR

- ¹⁷ May the mercy of The Master, of our God, be upon us!⁴
- ¹⁸ May the works of our hands be established before us! Yes, establish the work of our hands!

PSALM 91

CANTOR I

Whoever sits in the shadow of The Highest, who sleeps in the shade of The Almighty,

- ² can say to The Lord, "My refuge!

 My fortress! The God whom I trust!"
- ³ He will release you from snares,¹ snatch you from dangerous plagues.¹
- ¹ He will cover you with his feathers; he will hide you beneath his wings. Like a shield he securely surrounds you.²
- ⁵ You will not fear the terror of night, nor an arrow that flies in the daylight,
- ⁶ a plague that stalks in the darkness nor destruction that threatens at noon.
- ⁷ A thousand may fall at your side, a multitude close beside you, but you shall escape.
- * Indeed, you shall gaze with your eyes and see the wicked repaid.
- ⁹ As for you, The Lord is your shield;³ The Most High has placed you in safety.
- No evil can happen to you, no danger approach your home,
- ¹¹ for he has ordered his messengers to guard you from every ill.
- 12 They hold you in their hands, lest you strike your foot on a stone.
- ¹³ You can tread on lions or snakes,⁴ stamp on wild beast⁵ or serpent.

CANTOR II

- I will save those who hang on to me and protect those who know my name.
- When they pray I answer; I free and uphold them.⁶

If give them long life and demonstrate my help.

PSALM 92

A psalm. A song for the Sabbath Day.

CANTOR

- ² It is good to confess The Lord's praise, to sing to the name of The Highest,
- ^a to tell of his kindness at morning, of his faithfulness during the night,
- with the help of a harp or a lyre, with music and musical instruments!

CHOIR

- ⁵ Your deeds, O Lord, make me happy; the works of your hands make me sing.
- "How great are your deeds, O Lord! How very profound your thoughts!
- ⁷ The stupid man does not know; the fool cannot understand this
- * that the wicked may sprout like grass, that evildoers may flourish only to be destroyed.

- " You are exalted forever."
- ¹⁰ Lo, your enemies, O Lord, lo, your enemies shall perish. All evildoers shall be scattered.

CHOIR

- ¹¹ You make me as strong as an ox;² you refresh me with fragrant oil.³
- You allow me to look at my foes,⁴ at those who rise up to hurt me.

CANTOR

My ears have heard this:

- ¹³ The righteous shall flourish like palm trees; they shall grow like cedars of Lebanon.
- ¹⁴ Planted in the house of The Lord, in the courts of our God, they shall flourish,
- 15 continuing to thrive in old age, keeping their vigor and health
- 16 as they speak of the rightness of God, my Rock, who never does wrong.

PSALM 93

(The Gk has this superscription: for the Sabbath eve, when the earth was inhabited. A story-song for David.)

This brief psalm appears, in part at least, to be quite old. Its theme: God's power over chaos as seen in nature. Judging from its similarity to such psalms as 24 and 89, it may have been used for the great fall enthronement festival.

CHOIR

¹ The Lord becomes King, clothed in splendor. The Lord is clothed, yes, girded with strength.

CANTOR

² You made the world immovable, your ever-enduring throne. You exist from of old.

CHOIR

³ The rivers lift up, O Lord, the rivers lift up their thunder. The rivers are raising their waves.¹

CANTOR

⁴ The Lord, in the heights, is more awesome than the mighty, thundering waters or the awesome waves of the sea.²

CHOIR

Your testimonies are very reliable. Hence, your house must be holy forever and ever, O Lord.

PSALM 94

(The Gk has this superscription: a Davidic psalm, for the fourth day of the week.)

The first part of this psalm seems to be old. In vss. 10-11 there is a shift to a later, didactic style.

- ¹ The avenging God, The Lord, the avenging God shines forth.
- ² Be exalted, O Ruler of Earth! Pay to the proud their wage.

CHOIR

- ³ How long must the wicked, O Lord, how long must the wicked exult?
- ⁴ They speak, they bubble with insolence; they prattle, those doers of evil.
- ⁵ They crush your people, O Lord; they afflict your heritage.
- ⁶ They murder the unprotected; they kill both widows and orphans¹
- 7 and say, "The Lord is not looking. Jacob's God cannot see it."

CANTOR

- ⁸ Think, most stupid of people! O fools, when will you know?
- ⁹ Can he who created the ear not hear? Can he who formed the eye not see?
- 10 Can he who admonishes nations not punish
 —he who gives knowledge to man?
- 11 The Lord is aware of the thoughts of mankind,
 —thoughts that are vapor.

- ¹² Happy is the fellow you chastise, O Lord, he who is taught from your word.
- 13 It secures him when times are bad, while a pit is dug for the wicked.
- ¹⁴ The Lord never leaves his people; he never forsakes his heritage.
- ¹⁵ He executes justice fairly; all honest folk are his followers.²

CANTOR

- Who will defend me before the destructive and plead my case with the wicked?
- ¹⁷ Had The Lord not given me help, surely my life would be gone.⁴
- ¹⁸ If I say, "My feet are stumbling," your kindness, Lord, would support me.
- ¹⁹ When worries besiege my mind your compassion brings joy to my heart.
- ²⁰ Can the tents⁵ of deception join you, those who plan lawless mischief?
- ²¹ They gather to attack the righteous, condemning the blood of the innocent.
- ²² But The Lord shall be my defense; my God is my rockbound refuge.
- ²³ He turns their michief against them; he destroys their evil.

CHOIR

The Lord is our God.

PSALM 95

- ¹ Come, let us sing to The Lord! Let us shout to our mighty Savior!¹
- ² Let us approach him with praise and laud him with music,

- ³ for The Lord is a powerful God, the ruler of all other gods.
- ⁴ He possesses all parts of the earth, even the tops² of the mountains.
- ⁵ The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.

CHOIR

⁶ Enter! Bow down and worship!
 Let us kneel to The Lord, our maker,
 ⁷ for he is our God

 and we are his people,
 his flock, the sheep of his hand.

CANTOR

If today you can hear his voice

- 8 do not be stubborn as you were in the days of your wilderness wanderings,³
- ⁹ when your forefathers tried my patience, when they tested and saw what I did!
- For forty years I despaired.⁴ I said, "They are prone to stray. They cannot understand my ways."
- ¹¹ So, in my anger, I vowed that they would not enter my haven.

PSALM 96

CANTOR

¹ Sing to The Lord a new song! Sing to The Lord, O World!¹

² Sing to The Lord, give him honor!² Preach his salvation each day!

CHOIR

- ³ Tell to the nations his greatness, to all of the peoples his splendor!
- ⁴ The Lord is great: he is worthy of praise. He is more awesome than all other gods.

CANTOR

- ⁵ The gods of the peoples are false but The Lord really made the heavens.
- "Honor and splendor precede him, glory and strength, in his temple.

CHOIR

- ⁷ Ascribe to The Lord, O tribes of the peoples, ascribe to The Lord both honor and strength!
- * Ascribe to The Lord the glory of his name!

 Bring him³ a gift and enter his courts!

CANTOR

- " Worship The Lord in holy demeanor! Tremble before him, O Earth!
- 10 Say to the nations, "The Lord becomes King. He causes the world to endure. He rules the people correctly."

- ¹¹ The heavens rejoice and Earth is dancing while the sea, in its fullness, roars.
- 12 The fruitful fields are exulting4
 while the trees of the forest sing out

¹³ before The Lord, who approaches, who approaches to rule the earth. He rules the world and the peoples⁵ dependably and justly.

PSALM 97

CANTOR

- ¹ The Lord rules: let the Earth dance! Let its many islands rejoice!
- ² Surrounded by clouds and mist, triumph and justice enthrone him.
- ³ Fire proceeds before him flames, enshrouding his back.¹
- ⁴ His lightning illumines the world. The Earth beholds it and writhes.
- ⁵ The mountains are melting like wax² before The Lord,

before the Master of Earth.

CHOIR

- ⁶ The heavens proclaim his triumph while the peoples behold his glory.
- 7 All those who serve idols are shamed —those who sing praise to false gods, who will bow down to any god.

CANTOR

⁸ Zion has heard: she rejoices. The daughters of Judah are dancing because of your judgments, O Lord.

CHOIR

⁹ You, O Lord, are The Highest —much higher than all the earth,³ exalted above all gods.

CANTOR

10 If we love The Lord we hate evil.4

CHOIR

He guards the lives of his saints; he frees them from wicked men.

CANTOR

¹¹ A sown field awaits the just,⁵ joy for the upright of mind.

CHOIR

¹² Rejoice in The Lord, you righteous! Retain his holiness through praise.⁶

PSALM 98

A psalm.

CANTOR

Sing to The Lord a new song, for he has done wonders!

His right arm, his holy power, has gotten him victory.

The Lord has revealed his salvation.

² The Lord has revealed his salvation, displayed his triumph to the nations.

³ He remembered to be kind and faithful to the household of Israel. The whole earth has seen our God's salvation.

CHOIR

- ⁴ Shout to The Lord, O Earth!

 Break forth with music and singing!
- Sing to The Lord with instruments! With voices and instruments sing!
- ⁶ With cymbals and sound of the horn make noise for The Lord,¹ the King!

CANTOR

- ⁷ The sea and its waters are rumbling, the world and all of its creatures.
- 8 The rivers are clapping their hands and the mountains are singing together,
- ⁹ preceding The Lord as he comes to rule the earth.

CHOIR

He rules the world and the peoples correctly and justly.

PSALM 99

CANTOR

¹ When the Lord became King: the peoples trembled;

CHOIR

When he sat on his throne: 1 the earth stood in awe.2

CANTOR

² The Lord is greater than Zion, exalted above all the peoples.

CHOIR

³ Let them confess your great name, for it is awesome and holy.

CANTOR

⁴ O Powerful King, O Lover of Justice, it is you who creates what is right. All Jacob's justice and victories were wrought by you.

CHOIR

⁵ Extol The Lord, our God! Bow down in front of his feet! Holy is he.

CANTOR

- ⁶ Among his priests and worshippers were Moses and Aaron and Samuel. They prayed unto him and he answered.
- ⁷ He spoke to them in a pillar of smoke and they kept the decrees that he gave them.

CHOIR

O Lord, our God, it was you who responded. You became their supporting God, vindicating that which they did.

CANTOR

⁹ Extol The Lord, our God! Bow down at his holy mountain! The Lord, our God, is holy.

PSALM 100

A psalm of confession.1

CHOIR

Shout to The Lord, O Earth!²
² Work for The Lord with gladness and enter his presence with singing!

CANTOR

Understand that The Lord is God.
 We are his,³ for he made us
 —his people, the sheep of his pasture.

CHOIR

⁴ Enter his gates with confession, his courtyards with praise!

Confess him and honor his name!

The Lord is good:
his kindness endures;
his faithfulness never ends.

PSALM 101

For David. A psalm.

This is a late version of the type of liturgy we find in Psalm 15. Verses 6-8 represent God's response.

CANTOR

I will sing of kindness and justice; I will chant to you, Lord. ² I will probe the way that is right.
When does it come to me?¹

CHOIR

When I walk about in my home with a clear conscience,

- ³ when I do not follow the path of deception,²
 - when I hate the making of idols and avoid it completely,³
- 4 when the thought of deceit has left me and I know not evil,
- when, if one slanders his neighbor, I put him to shame, when I cannot stand the proud eye, the arrogant mind.

- 6 I desire that the faithful folk4 may dwell with me. He who follows the way that is right
 - He who follows the way that is right is the one who can serve me.
- No one can dwell in my household who lives in deception; the man who speaks what is false cannot stand before me.
- 8 Very soon I will put to silence⁵ all the wicked on earth, cutting off from The Lord's city all doers of evil.

PSALM 102

A prayer for the oppressed when he is troubled and wants to pour out his problem to The Lord.

Whether in an original version it was so intended or not, this psalm is conceived to be spoken on behalf of Jerusalem.

CANTOR

- ² Listen, O Lord, to my prayer! Permit my cry to be heard!¹
- Do not conceal yourself from me in my day of distress!
 Lend me your ear!
 Hasten to help when I call!

- ⁴ My days disappear like² smoke; my bones are like ash in the hearth. ³
- ⁵ My heart shrivels up like the grass, for I have neglected my food.
- 6 At the sound of my moaning my flesh adheres to my bones.
- ⁷ I have become like a wilderness vulture,⁴ like a scrawny bird⁵ of the desert.
- ⁸ I live without sleep like a bird all alone on a roof.
- ⁹ My foes continually taunt me and madmen⁶ use me for an oath.
- ¹⁰ I have eaten dust like bread and mingled tears with my drink

- in the face of your fury and wrath, for you took me and cast me away!
- ¹² My days pass like shadows and I am withering like grass.

CANTOR

¹³ But you, O Lord, you live on forever. Your memory never fades.⁷

CHOIR

- ¹⁴ Rise up, have compassion on Zion! It is time for pity: a feast approaches.
- ¹⁵ Your servants value her stones and pity her dust.

CANTOR

16 Let the nations respect your name,8 all kings of the earth your glory!

CHOIR

- ¹⁷ The Lord will surely build Zion and appear in his glory.⁹
- ¹⁸ He will turn to the cry of the destitute; he will not reject their prayer.¹⁰

CANTOR

¹⁹ Let this be recorded for posterity, that a people be created to praise you:¹¹

CHOIR

he looked down from his holy heights;
The Lord beheld Earth from the heavens

- to hear the groan of the prisoner, to release the children of death.
- to proclaim his name in Zion, his praise in Jerusalem,
- as he gathered the peoples together, the kingdoms, to serve The Lord.

CANTOR

²⁴ He has weakened my strength in midcourse; he has cut off my days and I say,

"My God, do not take me in mid-life!"12

CHOIR

Your years go on forever.

- 26 You made the earth long ago; the skies are the work of your hand.
- Yet they shall perish while you remain. They shall grow old like clothing: you change them like garments.¹³
- 28 You are he whose years never end.
- ²⁹ We only live on through our sons and only their seed will survive.

PSALM 103

For David.

CHOIR

Bless The Lord, my soul, every fiber, his holy name!

² Bless The Lord, my soul! Never forget all his goodness.

CANTOR

- ³ It is he who forgives all your sins. It is he who heals every sickness.
- ⁴ who saves your life from the grave, who crowns you with love and compassion,
- ⁵ who fills you to flowing with goodness, renewing your strength like the eagle's.

CHOIR

- "The Lord, who does rightcous deeds, brings justice to all the oppressed.
- ⁷ He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto Israel's sons.

CANTOR

- * The Lord, most gracious and loving, is patient and faithfully kind.
- ⁹ He does not keep contending nor hold to a grudge.

CHOIR

- ¹⁰ He does not treat us like sinners, nor has he repaid us for evil.
- ¹¹ As the heavens are higher than Earth, so great is his love to his saints.
- As far as the east from the west, so far has he taken our guilt.

CANTOR

¹³ As a father's concern for his children is The Lord's concern for his saints, ¹⁴ for he is aware of our weakness and remembers that we are but dust.

CHOIR

- 15 As for man, his life is like grass; like the flower of the field it blossoms.
- When the wind has passed over it dies and no one can know where it was.

CANTOR

¹⁷ But the love of The Lord is ancient and follows his saints to the end. His righteous deeds are for men,¹

18 that they live in his covenant, remember his laws and do them.²

CHOIR

19 The Lord! He established his throne in the skies. His dominion extends over all.

CANTOR

20 His messengers: bless The Lord!
Strong warriors who do his commands, who heed the sound of his words,
21 you servants who do his good will, all of his armies, bless him!

²² You created things all: bless The Lord from every part of his kingdom!

CHOIR

Bless The Lord, my soul!

PSALM 104

Psalms 104-106 form a trilogy extolling the acts of God in creation (Psalm 104) and in Israel's peculiar history (Psalms 105-106). There is nothing to suggest that one author wrote all three. They have only been grouped together for liturgical purposes.

CANTOR

- Bless The Lord, O my soul!O Lord, my God, you are great.
- ² You are clothed in splendor and glory, wearing the light as a cloak, stretching Heaven like a tent.

CHOIR

- ³ He covers his chambers with water. using the clouds as his chariot, walking on the wings of the wind,
- ⁴ making the winds his messengers and bolts of fire his servants.
- ⁵ He planted the earth on its moorings, never again to be moved.

- 6 Chaos enshrouded like a cloak; water stood higher than mountains,
- ⁷ but at your rebuke they fled; at the sound of your thunder they ran.
- 8 The hills rose, the valleys sank down to the points which you had decreed.

⁹ You set the immovable bounds which protect the earth from the sea.¹

CHOIR

- ¹⁰ He puts the springs in the brooks and they flow between the hills,
- watering the life of the meadows, quenching the thirst of wild beasts.
- ¹² Overhead dwell the birds of the air, warbling among the branches.

CANTOR

- ¹³ As you water the hills from above you satisfy Earth with your produce,
- ¹⁴ bringing forth grass for the cattle, vegetation for man to till to make the earth produce bread.

CHOIR

¹⁵ He makes man happy with wine, which brightens the face more than oil, and sustains man's life with bread.

- 16 He even provides for his trees, for the cedars he planted in Lebanon,
- 17 the place where the birds build nests, the trees² where the stork has her home.
- 18 High mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are the lair of the rabbit.³
- ¹⁹ He made the moon to set months, the sun for its daily journey.

CHOIR

- 20 You bring the dark: it is night and the beasts of the brush creep forth.
- ²¹ The young lions growl at their prey as they seek their food from God,
- ²² but at sunrise they all slink away to crouch for sleep in their dens.
- 23 Then mankind appears for his work, to work at his tasks until evening.

CANTOR

- ²⁴ How numerous are your deeds, O Lord and all of them done with such wisdom! Your activity fills the earth.
- ²⁵ There is the sea, great and wide, teeming with innumerable creatures, large ones and small ones together!
- There also the ships journey forth, where you made the sea monsters to sport.
- ²⁷ They all depend upon you to give them their food in due time.
- ²⁸ You give it, for they do but gather.
 You open your hand: they have plenty.
- You withhold your presence: they are anxious. You take their breath and they die and go back to the dust they came from.
- ³⁰ Yet you send back the breath and create, renewing the face of the earth.

CHOIR

May the honor of The Lord endure! May The Lord rejoice as he works! ³² He looks on the Earth and it trembles.

When he touches the mountains they smoke.

CANTOR

- 33 Let me sing to The Lord with my life! Let me chant to my God forever!
- 34 Let my thoughts about him be pleasing, for I want to be glad in The Lord!
- 35 Let sinners disappear from the earth! Let the wicked exist no more!

CHOIR

Bless The Lord, O my soul! Praise The Lord!

PSALM 105

- ¹ Confess to The Lord! Call out in his name! Make his deeds known to the peoples!
- ² Sing to him, chant to him! Think about all of his wonders!
- Boast of his most holy name!Be happy, disciples of The Lord!
- ⁴ Look for The Lord and his strength! Continually seek his presence!
- ⁵ Remember the deeds he performed, his signs and the things which he uttered,
- ⁶ O seed of Abram¹ his servant, offspring of Jacob his chosen!

CHOIR

- ⁷ He, The Lord, is our God In all the earth are his judgments.
- * He continues to remember his covenant, his decree, for a thousand generations,
- 9 the agreement he made with Abram, renewed with Isaac
- 10 and established as law with Jacob, his eternal covenant with Israel:
- "I give you the land of Canaan;" it is your inheritance."

- ¹² When they were but few in number, very few, and strangers within it,
- ¹³ they wandered from nation to nation, from kingdom to place of strange people.
- 14 He permitted no man to enslave them, taking their side against kings:
- "Do not touch my anointed! Do no harm to my prophets!"
- ¹⁶ He called for a famine on earth; he cut off the source of food.
- ¹⁷ But he sent one man on ahead
 —Joseph, who was sold as a slave.
- 18 They tied his feet with fetters; they bound his neck with iron
- ¹⁹ until there came a word, a promise of The Lord to test him.
- ²⁰ He sent a king to redeem him, a ruler of peoples to free him.

- ²¹ He made him the lord of his house, ruler of all he possessed
- ²² to control princes as he pleased and educate his elders!
- ²³ Then Israel entered Egypt, Jacob, the stranger, in Ham's land.
- 24 His family multiplied greatly; they outgrew their oppressors.
- ²⁵ He caused them to hate his people, to deal craftily with his servants.
- ²⁶ He sent his one servant, Moses, and Aaron, whom he had chosen.
- ²⁷ Then they set forth his signs, wonders in the land of Ham.
- ²⁸ He darkened the land; it was black.
 With their words they caused more rebellion.⁴
- ²⁹ He made their waters turn red and killed their fish.
- ³⁰ He made frogs cover their land and enter the royal rooms.
- ³¹ He spoke, and lo, there came insects, flies in every province.
- 32 He sent their rain as hail with fingers of fire for the land.
- ³³ He struck their vines and fruit trees; he damaged their government⁵ orchards.
- ³⁴ He spoke and the grasshoppers came, innumerable hordes of locusts.
- 35 They are all the grass in the land; they devoured all the fruit of the soil.

- 30 And then he struck at the firstborn, the symbol of all their strength.
- 37 So he led them out with rich plunder. 7 Not one from his tribes even faltered
- 38 and Egypt was glad when they left, for they had begun to fear them.
- ³⁰ He spread out a cloud as a covering and fire to illumine the night.
- ⁴⁰ He ordered the quail and they came; he fed them with bread from Heaven.
- 41 He opened up rock to get water and a stream ran into the desert.

CHOIR

- ⁴² He remembered his holy promise to Abram his servant
- ⁴³ and led forth his people rejoicing, his chosen with joy.
- ⁴⁴ He gave them the lands of the nations; they took what strangers had built.
- ⁴⁶ Therefore they must keep his commandments and guard his teachings.

Praise The Lord!

PSALM 106

CANTOR

Praise The Lord!
Confess that The Lord is good, that his grace is eternal!

² Who can describe all his powers or publish enough of his praise?

CHOIR

³ Happy are those who guard justice, who continue to do what is right!

CANTOR

⁴ Remember us, Lord, with favor!¹
Come to us with your salvation,
⁵ that we may enjoy the pleasures
that belong to those whom you choose,²
that we may rejoice as your nation,
give praise as your heritage people!³

- ⁶ We and our fathers have sinned; we have erred and done badly.
- ⁷ Our fathers in Egypt
 ignored your wonders;
 they forgot your abundant kindness.
 They rebelled at the sea, the swamp-sea.
- Yet, for his own honor, he saved them —to exhibit his power.
- ⁹ He rebuked the swamp-sea: it dried up; he led them through chaos, the desert.⁴
- ¹⁰ He freed them from the grasp of the foe, released them from the grasp of the enemy.
- ¹¹ The waters covered their oppressors: not one escaped.
- ¹² So they trusted his words; they sang his praise.

- ¹³ But they quickly forgot what he did and refused his counsel.
- 14 They became discontent in the desert; they tempted God in the wilderness.⁵
- 15 So he gave them whatever they asked; he sent what their hearts desired.⁶
- ¹⁶ In camp they were jealous of Moses and Aaron, who was holy to The Lord.
- ¹⁷ Earth opened and swallowed Dathan as it covered Abiram's company.
- 18 Fire broke out on that group; flames blazed at the wicked.
- They made a calf at Horeb; they worshipped an idol.
- They exchanged their Glory for the image of a grass-eating ox.
- ²¹ They forgot the God who had saved them, who had done such great things in Egypt,
- 22 the signs in Ham's land, the wonders at the swamp-sea.
- ²³ He decided to destroy them, but Moses, his chosen, stood in the gap before him to prevent his wrath from destroying.
- 24 They hated the idea of a good land. They would not trust his promise.
- ²⁵ They grumbled in their tents; they did not heed The Lord's voice.

- to cause them to fall in the desert,
- 27 to scatter7 their seed to the nations, to disperse them in the world.
- ²⁸ They were drawn to the Baal of Peor and ate food offered to the dead.
- ²⁹ They provoked him with all that they did and a plague broke out among them.
- Then Pinhas⁸ intervened with judgment. He halted the plague
- ³¹ and this was his vindication for all generations, forever.
- ³² They angered him at Meribah's waters and because of it Moses suffered.
- 33 They caused him to be so despondent⁹ that he spoke unwisely.
- 34 They did not wipe out the peoples as God had told them to do.
- ³⁵ They mingled with the nations and learned their ways.
- ³⁶ They worshipped their idols and that was their trap.
- 37 They offered their sons and their daughters to demons,
- 38 shedding innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, offered to the idols of Canaan.
- 39 Their deeds defiled them; their acts made them whores.

- 40 So The Lord became angry at his people, disgusted with his heritage.
- ⁴¹ He gave them to the nations; he sent them enemies.
- ⁴² Their foes oppressed them: they bowed in defeat.
- ⁴³ Again and again he freed them but they rebelled in their doubt and sank in their sin.
- 44 He saw their distress as he listened to their cry.
- ⁴⁵ He remembered his covenant with them. Out of his abundant kindness
- 40 he granted them pity and compassion—even at the hands of their captors.

CHOIR

⁴⁷ Save us, O Lord, our God!
Gather us from the nations,
that your holy name may be praised
and honored with hymns.

CANTOR

¹⁸ Blessed be The Lord, Israel's God, from age unto ages unending!

All the people say: Amen!

CHOIR

Praise The Lord!

PSALM 107

We use the words "grace" and "kindness" to translate the single Hebreu word besed at various points in the psalm.

CHOIR

- ¹ Confess that The Lord is good, that his grace is eternal!
- 2 —so say the redeemed of The Lord, those he redeemed from distress.
- ³ gathered from the lands, from the east and the west, from the north and the south.¹

CANTOR

- ⁴ Some wandered in the desert, the wasteland, not finding a city to dwell in.
- ⁵ Hungry and thirsty, their spirits were fainting.
- ⁶ Then they cried to The Lord in their trouble and he freed them from their distress.
- ⁷ He set them in the right direction for traveling to a city they could dwell in.

- 8 Let them confess The Lord's kindness and the wonders he does for mere man!
- He satisfied the desperate soul and filled the hungry with goodness.

CANTOR

- ¹⁰ Some sat in darkness and gloom, prisoners, afflicted in irons.
- 11 They had rebelled at God's words and spurned the counsel of The Highest,
- 12 so he humbled their hearts with toil. They stumbled with no one to help.
- ¹³ Then they cried to The Lord in their trouble and he saved them from their distress.
- 14 He led them from darkness and gloom; he removed their prisoners' chains.

CHOIR

- 15 Let them confess The Lord's kindness and the wonders he does for mere men!
- ¹⁶ He shattered the doors of bronze and cut the locks made of iron.

CANTOR

- ¹⁷ Some were sick from their sinful way and suffering from their affliction.
- ¹⁸ They loathed any manner of food and hung at the gates of death.
- ¹⁰ Then they called to The Lord in their trouble and from their distress he saved them.
- 20 He sent forth his word and healed them; he gave them relief from their troubles

- ²¹ Let them confess The Lord's kindness and the wonders he does for mere men!
- ²² May they bring an offering of praise and tell of his deeds with a song!

CANTOR

- 23 Some went to sea in ships, doing business upon the great waters.
- 24 They saw the deeds of The Lord, the wonders he does in the depths.
- 25 He speaks and stirs up the wind of the storm. The waves swell up;
- they climb to the sky and descend to the depths. Their spirits melted in terror;
- ²⁷ they staggered and reeled like drunkards. Their senses were swallowed away.
- ²⁸ Then they cried to The Lord in their trouble and he led them from their distress.
- ²⁹ He stilled the storm to calmness; the waves became quiet.
- 30 They rejoiced at the stillness and he led them to their destined port.

CHOIR

- 31 Let them confess The Lord's kindness and the wonders he does for mere men,
- 32 extol him in the great assembly and praise him at the seat of the elders!

- 33 He makes rivers run in the desert, putting channels of water in the wasteland.
- ³⁴ He changed good land to a salt flat, because of the evil of its residents,
- 35 but turned the desert to cropland, and dry land to irrigated fields
- ³⁶ and those who were hungry settled there; they established a city to dwell in.

- ³⁷ They seeded the fields, planted their vineyards and produced a fruitful crop.
- ³⁸ He blessed them: they prospered greatly. Their livestock continued to increase,
- ³⁹ though they had been humbled and afflicted with oppression, with trouble and sorrow.²

CHOIR

- ⁴⁰ He pours contempt upon princes, makes them wander in uncharted wasteland.
- ⁴¹ But he lifted the poor from their trouble and established their families like flocks.
- ⁴² When the righteous see this they rejoice while the scoundrels all close their mouths.

CANTOR

⁴³ Let the wise men take heed of these things and consider the grace of The Lord.

PSALM 108

A song. A psalm for David.

This psalm is not very original. Verses 2-6 are the same as Psalm 57:8-12 and verses 7-14 the same as Psalm 60:7-14. Consult those two sources for notes.

- ² My mind is at ease, O God. I will chant, I will sing.
- ³ Awake, my pride! Awake, O harp, O lyre! I would waken the dawn.

- ⁴ I confess you, O Lord, to the peoples.
 I praise you to the masses,
- ⁵ for your grace is as great as the heavens and your steadfastness reaches the clouds.

CHOIR I

⁶ God stands higher than the heavens; his glory is above the whole world.

CHOIR II

⁷ May your loved one, therefore, be rescued. With your power bring victory and triumph!

CANTOR

- ⁸ God, in his holiness, has spoken: "I exult as I portion out Shechem, as I measure out Emeg Succoth.
- Gilead is mine—and Manesseh; Ephraim, the helmet of my head. Judah is my scepter,
- Moab my washbowl,
 and I now cast my sandal for Edom.
 I have shouted in triumph at Peleshet.
- Who will bring me to a fortified city? Who will lead me into Edom?

CHOIR I

- Do you now reject us, O God? Will you not come out, God, with your armies?
- ¹³ Come with us to help fight the foe, for human salvation is vain!

CHOIR II

With God we can valiantly do it; it is he who can tread down our foes.

PSALM 109

For the conclusion. A psalm for David.

This psalm is difficult to translate and to interpret. Our quotation marks mean that we consider the vehement cursing of verses 6-19 to be the voice of the oppressor. It could be interpreted otherwise.

CANTOR

O God, be not deaf to my hymns,

- ² for a wicked mouth has attacked me!¹ Deceitful tongues argued against me;²
- ³ they assailed³ me with words of hate. For no cause they fought me.
- ⁴ In return for my love they despised me. While I was at prayer⁴
- 5 they brought it upon me—evil for good, hatred for love.

- ⁶ "Send some evil upon him! Let an adversary stand up against him!
- ⁷ Let evil come out of the conflict!⁵ May even his prayer become sinful!⁶
- 8 May his days become few! May another take his job!
- " May his sons become orphans! May his wife be a widow!

- May his children be wandering beggars, sought in the ruins they live in!⁷
- ¹¹ May the creditor snatch what he has and strangers plunder his property.
- 12 Let no one offer him kindness! Let no one pity his orphans!
- Let his posterity be cut off, blotted out from the next generation!
- ¹⁴ May his fathers' guilt be remembered!⁸ Remove not the sin of his mother
- 15 but keep it in front of The Lord that his memory be removed from the earth9
- ¹⁶ because he did not practice kindness! ¹⁰ He persecuted the poor and the needy and drove the downhearted to death.
- 17 He loved cursing, so let him now have it!

 He had no love for blessing, so take it far from him.
- ¹⁸ Clothe him with a curse his own size!¹¹ Let it enter his body like water, his bones like oil!
- ¹⁹ Force him to wear it like a cloak, like a belt that cannot be removed!"

CANTOR

- This is what my foes desire The Lord to do, those who plan evil for my life.
- ²¹ But you, Lord, my master, for the sake of your honor help me!¹² In the goodness of your grace rescue me,¹³
- ²² for I am helpless and needy; my heart is wounded within me.

- ²³ Like a lengthening shadow, I go
 —shaken off like a locust.
- ²⁴ My knees are weak from starvation; my flesh is drained of its fat.
- 25 I have become their scorn: when they see me they shake their heads.
- ²⁶ Help me, O Lord, my God! In your kindness, save me
- ²⁷ and show them that this is your hand, that you, O Lord, have done it!
- They may curse, but you shall bless. Those who rose shall be shamed, but your servant shall rejoice.
- 20 Let my enemies be clothed with disgrace! Let them wear their own shame as a cloak!
- 30 I will loudly confess you, O Lord; in the midst of many I will praise you.

CHOIR

31 He stands by the side of the needy to uphold what is right for his life.

PSALM 110

A psalm for David.

The text of this psalm is unclear at points. Akin in type to Psalm 2, it contains some of the earliest oracles establishing the Davidic dynasty.

CANTOR

An oracle of The Lord to my master: sit at my side till I make your foes a stool for my feet.

CHOIR

² May The Lord send out your strong scepter from Zion!
Rule in the midst of your foes!
³ Showers¹ accompany the day of your birth; as holiness appears from the womb of the dawn, Your youthful strength in like dew.²

CANTOR

⁴ The Lord has sworn and will not recant: you are forever a priest, my legitimate king,³ upon my decree.

CHOIR

⁵ The Lord⁴ at your side will smash kings on the day of his wrath.

CANTOR

⁶ May he rule among nations unformed!⁵ May you conquer a mighty land!⁸

CHOIR

'aleph

beth

⁷ He drinks from the brook by the road. Therefore he lifts up his head.⁷

PSALM 111

¹Praise The Lord!¹
I confess you wholeheartedly, O Lord,
in the gathering of the upright, the assembly.

gimel ² Great are the deeds of The Lord daleth and studied by all who love them! 3 His works2 spell glory and splendor; Ьe his triumphs stand ever secure. waw 4 Unforgettable are the wonders he did. zain heth The Lord is compassionate and merciful: 5 he gives daily bread to his worshippers teth yod and remembers his covenant forever. kaph ⁶ He revealed his strength to his people, giving them what nations possessed. lamed ⁷ What he does is just and enduring. memAll of his precepts are sure, กนท samech ⁸ established forever and ever. 'ain Perform them faithfully and rightly! 9 He brought freedom to his people; рe he established his covenant forever. sade qo ph His name is holy and awesome. 10 The beginning of wisdom is to fear him; resh shin to do what he wills is good judgment.3 His praise shall stand forever. tau

PSALM 112

Praise The Lord!¹

'aleph Happy is the man who fears God,³

beth who is very pleased with his laws!

gimel ² His seed shall grow strong in the land.

The generation of the upright is blest;

he ³ his household is wealthy and rich;

waw

his household is wealthy and rich; his triumph endures forever.

4 Light shines in the dark for the upright. 71in He is merciful, just and compassionate. hetb ⁵ It is good that man lends and has mercy, teth that he manages his affairs with justice, rod ⁶ for he shall never stumble. kaph The reputation of the righteous endures. lamed 7 He does not fear bad rumors. mem He is confident; he trusts The Lord. nun 8 His mind is anchored; he fears not, samech knowing he will outlive his foes. ain ⁹ He has sown: he has given to the poor. рe His triumph endures forever. sade he rises with strength and honor goph resh 10 while the wicked looks on with envy, shin gnashing his teeth as he melts. The hope of the wicked expires. 1111

PSALM 113

CANTOR

¹ Praise The Lord! Give praise, O servants of The Lord! Give praise to the name of The Lord!

² Let the name of The Lord be blest now and forever!

CHOIR

- ³ From the rising of the sun to its setting, let the name of The Lord be praised!
- ⁴ The Lord is above all the nations; his glory exceeds the heavens.

CANTOR

- 5 Who compares to The Lord, our God
 —seated so high
- 6 that he bends to look down on both Heaven and Earth?

CHOIR

- ⁷ Yet he raises the poor from the dust; he lifts the weak from the ashpit
- 8 to give them a seat beside princes, with the noblest of his people.
- ⁹ He brings barren women back home, rejoicing because they have sons. Praise The Lord!

PSALM 114

Psalms 114 and 115 are written as a single psalm in the Greek versions.

CANTOR

- When Israel came out of Egypt, Jacob's house from a land of strangers,¹
- ² Judah became The Lord's temple, Israel the realm of his rule.

CHOIR

- ³ The sea beheld and retreated; the Jordan reversed and flowed back.
- ⁴ The mountains jumped like wild rams, the hills like goats.²

CANTOR

What makes you retreat, O Sea? Why do you flow back, O Jordan?

⁶ Why do the mountains jump up, the hills leap like goats?

CHOIR

⁷ Tremble, O Earth, at his presence,³ at the presence of Jacob's God!

8 He changed the rock to a spring, made water gush forth from a boulder.

PSALM 115

CANTOR

¹ Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but unto your name be glory because of your steady kindness!¹

CHOIR

- ² Why should the nations be saying, "Where is your God?"
- ³ when our God is in heaven and does whatever he pleases?

CANTOR

- ⁴ Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands,
- with mouths that speak not a word, with eyes unable to see,

- with ears that hear not a thing and a nose that draws no breath.
- ⁷ Their hands cannot feel; their feet cannot walk; their throat cannot growl.

CHOIR

8 Those who make them are like them and so are those who trust them.²

CANTOR

9 Israel: trust in The Lord!

CHOIR

He is their help and their shield.

CANTOR

10 House of Aaron: trust in The Lord!

CHOIR

He is their help and their shield.

CANTOR

11 Let all The Lord's worshippers trust him!

CHOIR

He is their help and their shield.

May The Lord remember and bless us! May he bless the household of Israel! May he bless the household of Aaron! ¹³ May he bless those who worship The Lord, the small and the great together!

CANTOR

- 14 May The Lord give prosperity to you and your children!
- ¹⁵ May you be blest by The Lord, by him who made heaven and earth!

CHOIR

- ¹⁶ The Lord owns the heavenly spheres but to man he has given the earth.
- ¹⁷ Corpses cannot praise The Lord, those descended to silence.
- ¹⁸ But we, we can bless The Lord now and forever.

Praise The Lord!

PSALM 116

CANTOR

- ¹ I love The Lord, for he hears my cry for mercy.
- ² He lends me his ear whenever I pray.
- When the chains of death surround me, when the perils of Deathland invade, when grief and distress confront me
- ⁴ I pray in the name of The Lord: "O Lord, deliver my life!"

CHOIR

- ⁵ The Lord is merciful and just; our God is compassionate.
- ⁶ The Lord protects the helpless: when I was in need he saved me.
- ⁷ Return, O my life, to your refuge, for The Lord has treated you well.
- 8 He¹ rescued my life from death, my eyes from darkness, my feet from slipping.
- ⁹ So I walk in the presence of The Lord in the land of the living.²

CANTOR

¹⁰ I believed, so I spoke:

"I am deeply troubled."

11 I said in alarm:

"All mankind deceives."

CHOIR

- 12 What shall I bring to The Lord for all he has done for me?
- ¹³ I will lift up the cup of salvation and invoke the name of The Lord,
- 14 fulfilling my vows to The Lord before all his people.³

CANTOR

- Precious in the sight of The Lord is the death of his saints!
- ¹⁶ I ask, Lord, for I am your servant, your servant, the son of your handmaid: break off my fetters!

¹⁷ I will bring an offering of praise. I will pray in the name of The Lord,

18 fulfilling my vows to The Lord before all his people

in the courts of the house of The Lord, inside Jerusalem.

CHOIR

Praise The Lord!

PSALM 117

- ¹ Praise The Lord, all you nations! Laud him, all races!
- ² He exerts his kindness upon us; The Lord is eternally dependable. Praise The Lord!

PSALM 118

CANTOR

- ¹ Confess that The Lord is good, that his kindness endures.
- 2 Let Israel now say it:

CHOIR

his kindness endures.

CANTOR

3 Let Aaron's house say it:

CHOIR

his kindness endures.

CANTOR

4 Let his1 worshippers say it:

CHOIR

his kindness endures.

CANTOR

⁵ In distress I cried, "Lord, give me victory over death!"²

CHOIR

⁶ The Lord is with me: I fear not. What can man do to hurt me?

CANTOR

⁷ With The Lord is my help I can look on my foes in scorn.

CHOIR

- ⁸ It is better to rely on The Lord than to trust mankind.
- ⁹ It is better to rely on The Lord than to trust even great men.

CANTOR

10 All nations surround me:

CHOIR

in The Lord's name I cut them off.

CANTOR

11 They surround me; ah, how they surround me:

CHOIR

in The Lord's name I cut them off.

CANTOR

They surround me like bees, devouring³ like fire in the brush:

CHOIR

in The Lord's name I cut them off.

CANTOR

You may push to force me to fall, but The Lord is my help.

CHOIR

14 The Lord is my strength and my song;4 he shall be my salvation.

CANTOR

15 A sound of song and triumph in the tents of the righteous:

CHOIR

The arm of The Lord has prevailed!
The arm of The Lord is exalted!
The arm of The Lord has prevailed!"

CANTOR

¹⁷ I shall not die: indeed, I shall live and proclaim The Lord's deeds.

- ¹⁸ He⁵ truly chastised me, but not unto death.
- Open, O gates of victory!
 I would enter, confessing The Lord.

CHOIR

²⁰ The gateway of The Lord is where the righteous shall enter.

CANTOR

²¹ I confess you, for you gave me triumph;⁷ you became my salvation.

CHOIR

²² The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief stone of the corner.

CANTOR

23 This was The Lord's idea. In our eyes it is a marvel.

CHOIR

24 This is the day The Lord acted.
May it move us to celebrate with joy!

CANTOR

²⁵ We pray, Lord, please save us!

CHOIR

We pray, Lord, please free us!

CANTOR

²⁶ Blessed is he who enters in The Lord's name. They shall bless you from the house of The Lord.

CHOIR

²⁷ The Lord God has given us light.

CANTOR

Usher in the festival with branches! Lay them to the corner of the altar!

CHOIR

You are my God, I confess you. My God, I exalt you!

CANTOR

29 Confess that The Lord is good,

CHOIR

that his kindess endures!

PSALM 119

This psalm is the queen of all acrostics and, as such, can scarcely be fully appreciated in English. The first letter of each of the first eight distichs of the poem is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the first letter of each of the second eight distichs is the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and so on—to the end of its 176 distichs! The theme of the entire formal masterpiece is one: the instruction (Torah) of the Lord and its benefits. This is, of course, one of the latest compositions of the entire Psalter.

'ale ph

 Happy are those who live rightly, who follow The Lord's instruction!
 Happy are those who study, who ardently guard his testimonies!

- ³ Yes, those who follow his ways do not practice wrong.
- ⁴ You issued your own decrees to be ardently kept.
- ⁵ O that my ways could be set to keep your decrees!¹
- 6 I would never be shamed if I could keep all your commandments.
- ⁷ I can sincerely confess you when I learn your righteous judgments.
- 8 I will keep your decrees. Never forsake me!

beth

- " How can a youth clear his path to keep to your ways?
- ¹⁰ I have earnestly sought you. Let me not stray from your laws!
- ¹¹ I have hidden your word in my mind to keep from sinning against you.
- ¹² Blessed are you, O Lord! Teach me your decrees.
- With my lips I declare all of your judgments.
- 14 Following your laws makes me happier than having much wealth.
- ¹⁵ I think of your decrees; I examine your ways.
- ¹⁶ I delight in your laws.
 I will not leave your way.

gimel

¹⁷ Deal well with me that I may live and keep to your ways!

- ¹⁸ Protect² my eyes that I may study the wonders in your instruction!
- ¹⁹ I am a stranger in the land. Hide not your commandments from me
- ²⁰ My spirit is continually consumed with zeal for your judgments.
- ²¹ You rebuke the accursed and proud who stray from your commandments.
- ²² Take away my shame and reproach!

 I have guarded your testimonies.
- ²³ Even princes may sit and accuse me: I will still think of your laws.
- ²⁴ Indeed, your testimonies delight me and give me good counsel.

daleth

- ²⁵ I am ready to turn to dust.³ Revive me with your word!
- ²⁶ I reveal my ways and you sneer. Teach me your laws!
- ²⁷ Let me understand your decrees that I may rejoice at your wonders!
- 28 My life is sleepless with grief.
 Raise me with your word!
- ²⁹ Turn me away from false ways! Mercifully instruct me!⁴
- ³⁰ I choose a dependable way: I take your judgments.
- ³¹ I cling to your testimonies, Lord.

 Do not disappoint me!
- ³² I will run the course of your commands, for you give me freedom.

he

- ^{aa} Instruct me, O Lord, with your laws! I will guard them to the end.
- ³⁴ Teach, that I may guard your instruction and earnestly keep it.
- ³⁵ Guide me to the paths of your commandments,

for they give me pleasure.

- and Bend my mind to your testimonics and not to mere gain!
- ³⁷ Prevent me from looking at idols!⁵ Give me life through your way!
- ^{as} Make good to your servant your promise for those who revere you!
- 30 Remove the reproach which I dread!
 Your judgments are good.
- 40 Behold my zeal for your decrees! Give me life through your triumph!

waw

- ⁴¹ Let your kindness approach me, O Lord, your promised salvation!
- ⁴² Let me answer those who reproach me! I rely on your word.
- ⁴⁸ Snatch nothing true from my mouth⁴ as I wait for your judgments!
- ⁴⁴ I continually keep your instructions, forever and ever.
- 45 I walk about freely: I pursue your decrees.
- ⁴⁰ I speak before kings of your testimonies and experience no shame.
- ⁴⁷ I find delight in your commandments, the commandments I love.

⁴⁸ I revere⁷ your beloved commandments; I pursue your decrees.

zain

- ⁴⁹ Recall for your servant the words⁸ with which you sustained me!
- 50 This is my comfort in affliction: your life-giving utterance.
- 51 The arrogant endlessly deride me but I waver not from your instruction.9
- ⁵² I recall your ancient judgments and, Lord, they give comfort.
- 53 I am moved to disgust by the wicked who forsake your instruction.
- Your decrees have become my song in the house of my pilgrimage.
- 55 In the night I recall, Lord, your name. I keep your instruction.
- This is my calling: to guard your decrees.

heth

- ⁵⁷ My reward, O Lord—I have said it: to observe your word.
- 58 I have earnestly sought your mercy.

 Show pity as you promised!
- 59 I considered my ways and turned to follow your testimonies.
- ⁶⁰ I have hastened and not stopped to tarry in keeping your commandments.
- ⁶¹ When the ropes of wickedness surround me I remember your instruction.
- 62 At midnight I rise to confess you for prevailing judgments.

- 63 My companions are all those who fear you, who keep your decrees.
- 64 Your kindness, O Lord, fills the earth. Teach me your laws!

leth

- ⁰⁵ You have been good to your servant, O Lord, as you promised.
- Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I trust your commandments!
- ⁶⁷ Before I was humbled I strayed, but now I keep your utterance.
- ⁶⁸ You are good, Lord, and bring about good. Teach me your laws!
- ⁶⁰ The insolent smear me with lies but I earnestly guard your decrees.
- 70 Their mind has grown coarse but I still love your instruction.
- 71 It is good that I be humbled, in order to learn your laws.
- 72 Your instruction is better for me than quantities of silver and gold.

yod

- ⁷⁸ I am made and sustained by your hands. Instruct me, teach me your laws!
- 74 Your worshippers see and rejoice as I hope in your word.
- 78 I know, O Lord, that your judgments prevail:

you rightly humbled me.10

- 76 In your kindness show me compassion, as you promised to your servant!
- 77 Let me feel your mercies and live! Your instruction is my delight.

⁷⁸ Let the insolent be ashamed that they deceived me

while I study your decrees!

79 Let your worshippers come back to me and understand your testimonies!¹¹

80 May I steadfastly follow your precepts that I not be disappointed!

kaph

81 My spirit years for your help; your word is my hope.

82 I tirelessly look for your promise saying, "When will you comfort me!"

⁸³ You made me like a light in the fog¹² but still I forget not your laws.

84 How long shall I live?

When will you judge my persecutors?

85 The insolent try to trap me.

(Your instructions did not tell me this.) 13

⁸⁶ All your commandments are dependable.

Help me! I am persecuted by falsehood.

87 They almost remove me from the land but I will not leave your decrees.

88 In your kindness revive me!

I will keep the testimonies you uttered.

lamed

89 Forever, O Lord, your word stands fast in the heavens.

90 You are eternally steadfast: you created the earth and it stood.

⁹¹ By your order it still stands today.

All things are your servants.

- "2 If your teachings were not my delight my distress would kill me.
- ⁰³ I shall never forget your decrees. Through them you give life.
- ⁹⁴ I belong to you. Save me, for I seek your decrees!
- The wicked lie in wait to destroy me:
 I want to understand your testimonies.¹⁴
- of All perfect plans have an end but your orders are never restricted.
- mem 97 How I love your instruction!
 I study it all day.
 - 98 Your laws make me wiser than my foes for they always stay with me.
 - I understand more than my teachers, for your testimonies are my study.
 - 100 I know more than the elders, for I guard your laws.
 - 101 I have kept from the pathways of evil in order to keep your way.
 - 102 I have not turned away from your judgments,

for you have instructed me.

- 103 How sweet to the taste is your utterance! It is sweeter than honey.
- 104 Your decrees make me wise: therefore I hate the false ways.
- nun 105 Your word is a light for my feet, a lamp for my path.
 - 100 I fulfill what I vowed: to keep your righteous judgments.

107 I am greatly afflicted.

O Lord, give me life as you promised!

¹⁰⁸ Accept, Lord, the gifts of my lips and teach me your judgments!

109 My life is ever in your hands: 15
I will not forget your instruction.

110 The wicked have attempted to trap me, but I will not stray from your laws.

¹¹¹ I permanently possess your testimonies. They are the joy of my heart.

112 I am determined to live by your laws to the end of the age.

samech

¹¹³ I hate ambiguities¹⁶ but I love your instruction.

You are my shield, my protection. Your word is my hope.

¹¹⁵ Go away from me, doers of evil!
I guard the commands of my God.

116 As you promised, uphold and revive me! Let me not be disappointed!

Support me that I be saved!

I will always practice your laws.

118 I despise all who stray from your laws. Their cleverness is deceptive.

119 I eliminate all the sinners of the land¹⁷ because I have loved all your testimonies.

120 My body shudders from dread of you; I fear your judgments.

ain

¹²¹ I have done what is just and right.

Leave me not to my oppressors!

- 122 Guarantee what is good for your servant! Let not the insolent oppress me!
- ¹²³ I tirelessly look for your help, your prevailing promise.
- ¹²⁴ Apply your kindness to your servant! Teach me your laws!
- 125 I am your servant. Instruct me that I may understand your testimonies!
- 126 It is time for The Lord to act:18 they have damaged your teaching.
- ¹²⁷ Ah yes, I love your commandments more than gold or electrum.
- ¹²⁸ I follow your encompassing decrees and hate all deceptive ways.
- pe 129 Your testimonies are wonderful: therefore I guard them.
 - 130 Revealing your word gives light, teaching the simple.
 - 131 I have gasped, I have panted, as I long for your commandments.
 - 132 Turn to me! Comfort me with the justice reserved for your lovers!
 - 133 Secure my steps with your word! Let nothing foolish control me!
 - ¹³⁴ Free me from human oppression!

 I will keep your decrees.
 - ¹³⁵ Smile on your servant and teach me your laws!
 - ¹³⁶ My eyes have streamed with tears because I have not kept your teaching.

sade 137 You are righteous, O Lord; your judgments are right.

¹³⁸ You issued your testimonies to prevail, to be very dependable.

139 Vengeance consumes me, for my oppressors have forgotten your words.

Your utterance is very well tested.
Your servant loves it.

141 I am small and despised but I have not forgotten your decrees.

142 Your triumphs prevail forever; your teaching stands fast.

143 Trouble and oppression have found me but your commands are my joy.

144 Your testimonies always prevail.

Instruct me that I may live!

qoph

- 145 I have earnestly called, Lord: answer me! I guard your laws.
- ¹⁴⁶ I have called you, so save me! I keep your testimonies.

Your words are my hope.

148 My eyes have worked on into darkness to study your word.

O Lord, in your justice revive me!

150 Pursuers of mischief have approached (they are far from your teaching)

151 but you, Lord, are also near and all your commandments stand fast.

¹⁵² I learned before from your testimonies, for you made them eternal.

resh

153 See my affliction and save me, for I have remembered your teaching!

154 Contend my case and redeem me!

For the sake of your promise revive me!

155 Salvation is far from the wicked, for they seek not your laws.

Your mercies are abundant, O Lord. In your justice revive me!

157 There are many who trouble and pursue me but I waver not from your testimonies.

¹⁵⁸ I have looked with disgust at the faithless who do not try to keep your word.

O Lord, in your kindness revive me!

Your word is founded in truth; your judgment prevails forever.

shin

- 161 For no reason princes pursue me but my mind stands in awe at your words.
- 162 Your utterance makes me as glad as a man who has found much plunder.
- 163 I hate, I abhor deception but I love your instruction.
- 104 I give praise to you seven times a day because of your prevailing judgments.
- 165 Those who love your teaching shall prosper; they shall not stumble.
- 166 I await your salvation, O Lord.
 I perform your commandments.

¹⁶⁷ My very life guards your testimonies; I love them exceedingly.

¹⁶⁸ I have kept your decrees and testimonies; all of your ways are before me.

tau

169 Let my cry come before you, O Lord!
Make me wise, as your word declares!

¹⁷⁰ Let my request approach you!

Deliver me as you promised!

171 Let my lips pour forth a prayer that you would teach me your laws!

172 Let my tongue respond to your utterance, for all your commandments are right!

173 May your hand give me help, for I have chosen your decrees!

¹⁷⁴ I need your salvation, O Lord. I delight in your teaching.

175 Give me life and then I shall praise you!

May your judgments help me!

176 I have strayed like a sheep. Seek your servant.

> for I have not forgotten your commandments!

PSALM 120

A song of the stairs.

The entire series called "songs of the stairs" lends itself well to antiphonal reading. Indeed, they seem in some cases to have

been designed for this. We set them up so as to be read chanted by two groups, "Choir I" and "Choir II."

CHOIR I In distress I cried to The Lord and he answered me.

CHOIR II

² O Lord, rescue my life from lips that deceive, from tongues that lie!

CHOIR I

What do you earn? What is your gain, O lying tongue?

CHOIR II

⁴ A warrior's sharp arrows with glowing red sparks.

CHOIR I

⁵ Ah me, that I camp in Meshech, ¹ that I live by the tents of Kedar! ²

CHOIR II

- ⁶ My life has been lived in Rabbah³ with those who hate peace.
- ⁷ I try to be peaceful but they are for war.⁴

A song of the stairs.

CHOIR I

I lift my eyes to the hills from whence my help approaches.¹

CHOIR II

² My help is from The Lord, The Maker of Heaven and Earth.

CHOIR I

³ May he keep your foot from stumbling! May your guardian never sleep!

CHOIR II

⁴ Lo, the guardian of Israel will not slumber nor sleep.

CHOIR I

⁵ The Lord is your guardian and shield, close to your side.²

CHOIR II

The sun cannot strike you by day nor the moon by night.

CHOIR I

⁷ May the Lord protect you from³ evil; may he guard your life.

CHOIR II

8 May he⁴ guard your coming and going now and forever.

PSALM 122

A song of the stairs. For David.

The Hebrew word shalom is a central concept in the latter half of this psalm. Usually translated "peace" it connotes everything positive and healthy—prosperity, rest, health, fortune, wealth, etc. We take the liberty to translate it in more than one way.

CHOIR I

I am happy when someone says, "Let us go to the House of The Lord!"

CHOIR II

² Our feet used to stand in Jerusalem's gates.²

CHOIR I

³ Jerusalem was built to be joined to a temple,³

CHOIR II

⁴ where the tribes could go up, the tribes of The Lord.

CHOIR I

It is Israel's witness⁴ to confess The Lord's name.

CHOIR II

There sit the thrones of judgment, the seat of the House of David.

CHOIR I

6 Ask for the peace of Jerusalem.

CHOIR II

May your friends have rest!

May your workers prosper!

May your courts enjoy peace!

CHOIR I

⁸ For the sake of my brother, my friend let me say, "Peace for you!"

CHOIR II

9 For the sake of The Lord-my-God's house I will seek your good welfare.

PSALM 123

A song of the stairs.

CHOIR I

- ¹ I lift my eyes unto you who dwell in the heavens!
- ² As the eyes of a servant look up to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress.

so we look to The Lord, our God, until he has mercy.

CHOIR II

- ³ Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy! We have had enough of contempt.
- Our lives have been sated enough¹ with the scoffing of the rich, the contempt of the proud.

PSALM 124

A song of the stairs. For David.

CANTOR

Had The Lord not been on our side . . . (Let Israel now say it)

CHOIR I

- ² Had The Lord not been on our side when Man rose against us,
- ³ we would have been swallowed alive by their anger toward us.
- ⁴ The waters would have washed us away;¹ the river would have covered us over;
- 5 the high-rising waters would have covered us over.

CHOIR II

⁶ Blessed be The Lord! He did not give us over as prey. We escaped like birds who dart off from the hunter's trap.

The trap broke and we have escaped.

We were helped by the name of The Lord, The Maker of Heaven and Earth.

PSALM 125

A song of the stairs.

CHOIR I

Those who trust in the Lord are like Zion: it moves not; it stands forever.

CHOIR II

² Ah Jerusalem, with hills round about, As The Lord stands around his people now and forever!

CHOIR I

³ A ruler who is wicked is not tolerated for the heritage of the righteous, in order that the hands of the righteous not touch what is filthy.

CHOIR II

⁴ Do good, Lord, to those who are good, whose minds are upright!

CHOIR I

⁵ But may The Lord lead away the makers of mischief, inclined to perversity!

CHOIRS I AND II

Peace upon Jerusalem!

PSALM 126

A song of the stairs.

There is enough inconsistency in the verb forms of this psalm to make it difficult to tell whether it refers to the past or the future. We have chosen to translate it in the past tense throughout.

CHOIR I

When The Lord brought us back to Zion it was like a dream.

Our mouths were filled with laughter; our tongues were singing.

The nations were saying,

"The Lord has done great things with them."

CHOIR II

³ The Lord has done great things with us. We are now happy.

⁴ The Lord has brought back his captives¹ like streams in the desert.

CHOIR I

⁵ They who sowed with tears are reaping with joy.

Choir II

⁶ He went away weeping, carrying his seed-bags; he comes back singing, bearing his sheaves.²

PSALM 127

A song of the stairs. For Solomon.

CHOIR I

If The Lord does not build the house its builders labor in vain.

CHOIR II

If The Lord does not guard the city its watchmen guard in vain.

CHOIR I

² You are foolish to rise up early and go to bed late.

CHOIR II

You think you must earn your bread¹ but The Lord gives sleep to his darling.

CHOIR I

³ Sons are a heritage of The Lord; the fruit of the womb, a reward.

CHOIR II

⁴ Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the sons of vigorous youths.²

CHOIR I

⁵ Happy are those whose quivers are filled with such!³

CHOIR II

They shall not be humiliated, but shall drive the foes from the gate.

PSALM 128

A song of the stairs.

CHOIR I

Happy are you who fear God,¹
who walk in his ways!
You shall eat what your hands pro

² You shall eat what your hands produce. Success and good luck to you!

CHOIR II

³ Your wife is a fruitful vine in the rooms of your home. Your sons like olive saplings around your table.

CHOIR I

⁴ Behold, it is so.

A man shall be blest if he fears The Lord.

CHOIR II

- May The Lord bless you from Zion!
 May you see Jerusalem prosper
 as long as you live!
- ⁶—and may you live to see your grandsons!

CHOIRS I and II Peace be on Israel!

PSALM 129

A song of the stairs.

CANTOR

They have greatly tormented me since childhood . . . (Let Israel now say it)

CHOIR I

- ² They have greatly tormented me since childhood but they have not prevailed.
- ³ The wicked have plowed¹ on my back; they have made long furrows.

CHOIR II

- ⁴ O Lord, Righteous One, cut off the bonds of the wicked!
- ⁵ May all of those who hate Zion turn back in disgrace!
- ⁶ May they be like grass on the rooftops, which withers before it is removed
- 7 (the harvester cannot take a handful, nor a sheaf to his bosom)
- * that those who pass by may not say,
 "The blessing of The Lord your God be upon you!
 We bless you in the name of The Lord"!

PSALM 130

A song of the stairs.

CHOIR I

I call from the depths, O Lord.

² Lord, listen to my voice!

Let your ears be attuned to hear
the sound of my plea!

- ^a If, Lord, you remember guilt, who, Lord, can stand?
- ⁴ But you are forgiving and therefore respected.

CHOIR II

⁵ I wait, O Lord; my whole being waits. I hope in your¹ word.

CHOIR I

⁶ My whole being hopes for The Lord more than watchmen wait for the dawn.²

CHOIR II

⁷ Let Israel hope in The Lord, for The Lord deals kindly. He continues to redeem.

CHOIRS I and II

*Yes, he is redeeming Israel
from all her guilt.

PSALM 131

A song of the stairs. For David.

CANTOR

O Lord, my mind is not proud; my eyes are not haughty.

I indulge not in matters that exceed my control.

Had I not been lowly, but exalted myself, my life would be weaned like a child weaned of mother.

CHOIR

³ Let Israel hope in The Lord now and forever!

PSALM 132

A song of the stairs.

Like Psalm 2 or Psalm 110, the heart of this liturgy is the oracle of God which established the Davidic dynasty and, consequently, all the messianic hopes which arose from it.

CANTOR

Recall, Lord, for David's benefit, all his obeisance, how he took an oath to The Lord and vowed to The Strength of Jacob.¹

CHOIR

- "I will not enter my own tent nor climb to my stately bed;
- I will give to my eyes no sleep, to my eyelids no slumber,
- till I find a place for The Lord, a dwelling for The Strength of Jacob."

CANTOR

- ⁶ Lo, we have heard it in Ephrathah. It has reached the brushy fields.
- 7 Let us approach his dwelling and prostrate ourselves at his feet!

CHOIR

- 8 Arise, O Lord, at your lodge —you and the ark of your strength!²
- ⁹ May your priests be clothed in triumph and your saints be singing!
- 10 For the sake of your servant David do not reject your anointed!

CANTOR

- The Lord took an oath to David which he surely will not rescind: "From the fruit of your belly I will build you a throne.3
- 12 If your sons will keep my agreement, the testimonies which I will teach them, even their sons forever will sit on your throne."

CHOIR

- ¹³ The Lord has singled out Zion, desired it for his seat:
- "This is my lodge forever; here I desire to sit.
- ¹⁵ I will surely bless her supplies to provide her hungry with bread.
- I will clothe her priests with salvation. Her saints shall be singing.
- There I will make David flourish. I provide light for my anointed.⁴
- I will wrap his enemies in shame while a crown gleams forth on his head."

PSALM 133

A song of the stairs. For David.

CHOIR I

Behold how good, how pleasant, when brothers can live together!

CHOIR II

² It is like pure oil on the head running down on the beard, running down the grey beard of Aaron¹ to the collar of his cloak,

CHOIR I

³ like dew from Hermon descending on the heights of Zion.

CHOIR II

There The Lord ordered this blessing: life that goes on.

PSALM 134

A song of the stairs.

CANTOR

Behold how all The Lord's servants have blessed The Lord as they stand in the house of The Lord, in the courts of the house of our God!¹

CHOIR I

² Pray² to the Holy One! Bless The Lord!

CHOIR II

^a May The Lord who made Heaven and Earth grant you a blessing from Zion!

PSALM 135

CANTOR

¹ Praise The Lord!

Praise the name of The Lord!

Praise, O servants of The Lord,

² who stand in the house of The Lord, in the courts of the house of our God!

CHOIR

- ³ Praise The Lord for his goodness! Sing to his beautiful name!
- ⁴ The Lord chose Jacob for himself, Israel for his treasure.

CANTOR

- ⁵ I know that The Lord is great, greatest of all of the gods.
- ⁶ The Lord can do as he pleases in Heaven or Earth,² in the sea or the depths.

CHOIR

⁷ He brings up the clouds from the ends of the earth. He made the lightning for storms and brings out the wind from its sources.

CANTOR

- 8 He struck at the firstborn of Egypt, both human and beast.
- ⁹ He performed signs and wonders in the midst of Egypt, among Pharaoh and all of his servants.
- He struck at many nations; he killed powerful kings
- "-Sihon,3" the Amorite king, and Og, the king of Bashan: all of the Canaanite kingdoms.

¹² Then he gave their land as a heritage, a heritage for Israel, his people.

CHOIR

13 The Lord⁴ is your name forever, your memorial for many generations.

CANTOR

- 14 The Lord is judging his people; he has mercy on his servants.
- ¹⁵ The idols of the nations are silver and gold: the work of man's hands,
- with mouths that speak not a word, with eyes unable to see,
- ¹⁷ with ears that hear not a thing and a nose that draws no breath.
- 18 Those who made them are like them and so are those who trust them.⁵

CHOIR

- ¹⁹ Bless The Lord, house of Israel! Bless The Lord, house of Aaron!
- ²⁰ Bless The Lord, house of Levi! Let all The Lord's worshippers bless him!

CANTOR

21 The Lord is blest at Zion, at Jerusalem, his dwelling.

CHOIR

Praise The Lord!

PSALM 136

This psalm was possibly meant to be a response to Psalm 135. This is, of course, composed to be read responsively with the "cantor" reading the variable lines and the "choir" responding with "his kindness endures," a line which could as well have been rendered "his grace is eternal" (which the reader may choose if he prefers).

CANTOR

¹ Confess that The Lord is good!

CHOIR

His kindness endures

CANTOR

² Confess to the God of Gods!

CHOIR

His kindness endures

CANTOR

³ Confess to the Master of Masters,

CHOIR

His kindness endures

CANTOR

4 to the One who does singular wonders,

CHOIR

CANTOR

5 who cleverly made the heavens,

CHOIR

His kindness endures

CANTOR

" who spread out the earth on the seas,

CHOIR

His kindness endures

CANTOR

⁷ who made the gigantic lights,

CHOIR

His kindness endures

CANTOR

"the sun to rule in the day,

CHOIR

His kindness endures

CANTOR

" the moon and the stars in the night,1

CHOIR

His kindness endures

CANTOR

10 who struck at the firstborn of Egypt,

CHOIR

His kindness endures

CANTOR

11 bringing Israel out from among them,

CHOIR

His kindness endures

CANTOR

12 with strength, with an arm outstretched,

CHOIR

His kindness endures

CANTOR

13 who divided the swamp-sea in two,

CHOIR

His kindness endures

CANTOR

14 letting Israel pass through the middle,

CHOIR

His kindness endures

CANTOR

15 who upset Pharaoh's host2 in the sea,

CHOIR

CANTOR

16 who ruled his folk in the desert,

CHOIR

His kindness endures

CANTOR

17 who struck at mighty kings,

CHOIR

His kindness endures

CANTOR

18 killing powerful kings,

CHOIR

His kindness endures

CANTOR

19 Sihon,3 the Amorite king,

CHOIR

His kindness endures

CANTOR

20 and Og, the king of Bashan.4

CHOIR

CANTOR

21 He gave their land as a heritage,

CHOIR

His kindness endures

CANTOR

22 a heritage for Israel, his servant.

CHOIR

His kindness endures

CANTOR

²³ He remembered us in our weakness

CHOIR

His kindness endures

CANTOR

24 and freed us from our foes.

CHOIR

His kindness endures

CANTOR

²⁵ He provides food for all flesh.

CHOIR

CANTOR

20 Confess to the God of the heavens!

CHOIR

His kindness endures.

PSALM 137

This is one of the most touching laments of all those which came out of the experience of Judah's exile. We take verses 4-6 to represent the song they sang by the rivers in Babylon. The last line should be read with the accent on the word "your."

CANTOR

- ¹ By the rivers in Babylon, there we sat down and we wept at the thought of Zion.
- ² We hung up our lyres¹ on the trees of that land,
- " for there our captors requested a song; our foes" wanted mirth: "Sing us a song of Zion!"

CHOIR

- ⁴ "How can we sing The Lord's song in a foreign land?
- ⁵ If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my arm shrivel up!⁸
- "May my tongue cling to my palate if I do not remember

if I do not consider Jerusalem my greatest of joys!"

CANTOR

⁷ Remember the Edomites, Lord, when Jerusalem fell!⁴
"Raze it, raze it," they said, "to its very foundations!"
⁸ O Babylon, you devastator, happy be he who pays back the deeds which you did to us!
⁹ Happy be he who will dash

your infants against the rock!5

PSALM 138

David.

CANTOR

I earnestly confess you, O Lord.¹ In the presence of God² I sing praise.

CHOIR

² I bow toward your holy temple, confessing your name, in respect to your dependable kindness. Your name³ has become very great.

CANTOR

³ Whenever I call you have answered, empowering my life.

- ¹ May all kings confess you, O Lord, when they hear the words of your mouth!
- ⁵ May they sing of the ways of The Lord, for the honor of The Lord is great!

CHOIR

The Lord is high but regards the lowly and knows the proud from afar.⁴

CANTOR

⁷ If I walk into⁶ trouble sustain me! Reach out against my foes; with your right arm save me.⁶

CHOIR

* May The Lord be generous to me! Your kindness, O Lord, endures. Continue the things that you do!

PSALM 139

For the conclusion. For David. A psalm.

O Lord, you have searched me and known me.

- You know when I sit, when I rise, understand what I think¹ from afar.
- ³ You have found when I waken or rest, been familiar with all that I do.
- ⁴ A word need not yet reach my tongue before you know, Lord, what it is.
- ⁵ You beset me in front and behind and press your hand down from above.

- ⁶ Such knowledge is far beyond me. It is deep: I cannot comprehend it.
- ⁷ Where can I go to escape?
 Where can I hide from your presence?
- ⁸ If I climb to the skies you are there; if I lie down in Hell, there also.
- ⁹ Could I flee on the wings of the dawn and camp far beyond the ocean,
- 10 even there your presence would follow. Your strong arm would grasp me.
- ¹¹ If I say, "Let the darkness enshroud me! Let the daylight around me be night!"
- ¹² I find that the dark cannot daunt you, that night seems as bright as the day and darkness like light.
- 13 It was you who formed my organs² and clothed me in the womb of my mother.
- ¹⁴ I confess it: you are marvelous. The things that you do are amazing. You have known me from the beginning.
- ¹⁵ My shape³ was not hidden from you when I was molded in secret, planned in the depths of the earth.
- ¹⁸ Your eyes beheld my embryo and determined the span of my life when I had not yet lived a day.⁴
- Your ideas are awesome to me and, God, how splendidly numerous!

- They outnumber the sand of the seashore.I stop dreaming⁵ and they still go on.
- Slay the wicked, O God! Let those who make idols turn back,
- ²⁰—those who make plans against you as they ridicule and insult your cities, ⁶
- ²¹ could I not then despise those who hate you⁷ and loathe those who rise up against you?
- ²² Ah yes, I could perfectly hate them! They would then be my foes.
- ²⁸ Search me, O God, and know me!⁸ Probe and examine my thoughts!
- ²⁴ See if my way be dangerous and lead me on a way that endures!

PSALM 140

For the conclusion. A psalm for David.

CANTOR

- ² From human evil, Lord free me! Protect me from the violent men,
- ³ from men whose minds plan trouble, who always stir up dissension!
- ⁴ Their tongues are sharp as a snake's; their lips hide a viper's venom.

CHOIR

⁵ From the grasp of the wicked, Lord, guard me! Protect me from violent men¹ who have planned to push me off course,

⁶ the haughty,² who try to entrap me, who seek to ensnare me with ropes, setting traps beside my path!

Selah

CANTOR

⁷ I said, "Lord, you are my God. Hear, Lord, my cry for mercy!"

⁸ O Lord,³ my saving strength, you cover my head in battle.

⁹ Grant not the desires of the wicked! Let not his plan succeed!⁴

Selah

CHOIR

They lift their heads around me.

Let the mischief of their own lips cover them!

May hot coals rain down⁵ upon them. May they fall amidst fire, never to rise from the depths!⁶

CANTOR

¹² A slanderer should not stand secure. May trouble pursue the violent with speed!⁷

CHOIR

- ¹³ I know that The Lord pleads the cause of the poor, the rights of the afflicted.
- 14 So the righteous confess his name; the upright sit in his presence.

I have called you, O Lord: come quickly!
Listen to my voice as I call you!

Let my prayer be received
as incense before you,
my uplifted hands as an offering!

- ³ Keep guard, O Lord, of my lips; keep watch at the door of my mouth.¹
- ⁴ Prevent me from thinking of evil, from practicing things that are wrong, with men who do mischief. Let me not eat of their dainties.²
- 5 Let The Righteous One strike me, the faithful rebuke me, but let not the oil of the wicked even touch my/ head!

I continue to pray againt their evil.

- "When their leaders are cast by the cliff they shall hear my words with pleasure.
- ⁷ Broken and shattered in the earth, their bones scattered in the grave.³
- 8 My eyes look to you, O Lord.
 I have trusted in you: let my life not be emptied!
- Protect me from the trap they have set, from the snares of those who do evil!

May the wicked fall into their own traps while I, by myself, escape!⁴

PSALM 142

naskil for David, in honor of when he was in the cave. A er.

CHOIR

- ² I cry aloud to The Lord.
 I pray aloud to The Lord.
- ³ I pour out my thoughts before him; I reveal my problem before him.

CANTOR

- When my spirit begins to fail me you are still aware of my path. (In the path which I tread they have hidden a trap.
- There is no way left for escape and no one to find me.)

CHOIR

- ⁶ I cry out to you, O Lord.
 I say, "You are my refuge, my reward in the land of the living."
- 7 Hearken to my cry! I am sorely in need. Save me from pursuers who are mightier than I!

* Lead my life out of this prison that your name may be praised! The righteous will gather around me when you grant me aid.

PSALM 143

A psalm for David.

Listen, O Lord, to my prayer! Give ear to my plea! In your righteous faithfulness answer me!

- ² Let not your servant be condemned! No creature stands justified before you.
- 3 An enemy has persecuted me.

 He has crushed my life to the ground.

 He has laid me in darkness like corpses long
- ⁴ My spirit has begun to fail me; my heart is numb within me.
- I recall the times long past.
 I think of all your deeds;
 I reflect on¹ the things you have done.
- ⁶ I stretch out my hands before you, with a spirit as thirsty as a desert.
- Answer me quickly, O Lord!
 My life is finished.
 Do not hide yourself from me lest I join those who go to the grave!
- * Let me hear soon² of your kindness! I have trusted in you.

Show me the way I should go! I commit my life unto you.³

- ⁹ Rescue me, Lord, from my foes! I approach you for help.
- 10 Teach me to do what you want, for you are my God! May your health-giving spirit guide me to a land that is safe.
- For your own sake, O Lord, sustain me! By your right which prevails⁴ lead my life out this trouble!
- ¹² In your mercy cut off my foes! Destroy all who trouble my life, for I am your servant!

PSALM 144

David.1

CANTOR

Blessed be The Lord, my Rock, who trained my hands for war, my fingers for battle

—my Trust, my Fort, my Wall, my Deliverer, the Shield I rely on, subduing my people beneath me!

CHOIR I

³ What is man that you, Lord, should know him, a human, that you should consider him?

CHOIR II

⁴ Man is a vanishing breath, whose days pass like a shadow.

CANTOR

- ⁵ Bend the skies, O Lord, and come down! Touch the hills and make clouds!
- ⁶ Strike with many-forked lightning! Send your quick-darting arrows!
- ⁷ Stretch out your hand from on high! Free me! Save me from the towering waters, from the power of strangers
- 8 whose mouths speak lies, whose help² is deceptive!

CHOIR I

- 9 O God, I will sing you a new song, serenade you with a harp of ten strings.
- ¹⁰ It is you who grants victory to kings, who has freed David, your servant, from a dangerous sword.

CHOIR II

¹¹ Free me! Save me from the power of strangers, whose mouths speak lies, whose help is deceptive!

CANTOR

Our sons are like plants,³ growing in their youth.
Our daughters, like pillars exquisitely carved for a temple.

Our granaries are full, dispensing all kinds of grain. Our flocks are increasing, multiplying in our fields.

Our cattle are heavy
—without miscarriage, early birth,
or sound of distress in the pastures.

CHOIRS I AND II

15 Happy the people who can say this!

Happy the people whose God is The Lord!4

PSALM 145

A prayer for David.

this is the last of the acrostics in the Psalter and one of the inest in terms of literary value. 11QPsa has proven to be a great liscovery as far as this psalm is concerned. In the first place, he missing "nun" lines of the Heb text (consult any older ranslation) are present in the Qumran scroll. In the second place, 11QPsa furnishes a lovely congregational response after each acrosic line. The psalm can then be read antiphonally, the cantor" taking the acrostic lines and the "choir" the responses.

aleph I exalt you, my God, as king.
I will bless your name forever.
Blessed be The Lord!
His name is blessed forever.
beth 2 I will bless you at all times;
I will praise your name forever.
Blessed be The Lord!
His name is blessed forever.

gimel ^a Great is The Lord, greatly praised; his great deeds, beyond comprehension. Blessed be The Lord! His name is blessed forever. daleth ⁴ Every generation must laud him and declare his mighty deeds. Blessed be The Lord! His name is blessed forever. ⁵ I will think of the story of your wonders¹ be and the splendor of the weight of your glory. Blessed be The Lord! His name is blessed forever. ⁶ May the might of your terror be published!² waw Let me tell your great deeds! Blessed be The Lord! His name is blessed forever. zain ⁷ May your memorable goodness be celebrated! May your triumphs be sung! Blessed be The Lord! His name is blessed forever. hetb ⁸ The Lord is compassionate and merciful, patient and dependably kind. Blessed be The Lord! His name is blessed forever. teth " The Lord favors all, with mercies for all he has made. Blessed be The Lord! His name is blessed forever. 10 May all of your works, Lord, confess you! rod

May all of your works, Lord, confess you!

May the objects of your kindness bless you!

Blessed be The Lord!

His name is blessed forever.

PSALMS 90-150 11 May they speak the pride of your kingdom kaph and tell of your might! Blessed be The Lord! His name is blessed forever. lamed 12 Mankind should know his might, the weight of the splendor of his kingdom. Blessed be The Lord! His name is blessed forever 13 Your kingdom will last forever; mem your rule touches all generations Blessed be The Lord! His name is blessed forever. What God has said is dependable; nunall that he does can be trusted.3 Blessed be The Lord! His name is blessed forever. 14 The Lord supports what is falling; samech he raises all who are bending. Blessed be The Lord! His name is blessed forever. ain 15 May all eyes look up to you, for you give them bread, their food when they need it. Blessed be The Lord! His name is blessed forever. 16 You4 open your hand þе to satisfy the needs of all creatures.

Blessed be The Lord! His name is blessed forever. sade ¹⁷ All The Lord's ways are righteous, all that he does can be trusted. Blessed be The Lord!

His name is blessed forever.

qoph

18 The Lord is near those who call him, all those who call him in faith.

Blessed be The Lord!

His name is blessed forever.

resh ¹⁹ He fulfills the needs of his worshippers; he hears their cry and helps them.

Blessed be The Lord!

His name is blessed forever.

shin 20 The Lord protects all those who love him but destroys all who are wicked.

Blessed be The Lord!

His name is blessed forever.

²¹ Let my mouth speak The Lord's praise! Let all flesh bless his holy name.

Blessed be The Lord! His name is blessed forever.⁴

PSALM 146

CANTOR

tau

Praise The Lord.¹
Praise The Lord, O my soul!

² Let me praise The Lord with my life!
Let me sing to The Lord with my strength!

CHOIR

³ Do not put your trust in leaders, in a man, who can give you no help.

When he dies he returns to the ground and on that day his plans must be ended.

CANTOR

- ⁵ Happy is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is The Lord, his God,
- the God who made Heaven and Earth, the seas and all that is in them, who keeps himself steadfast forever,
- ⁷ who guarantees justice for the poor, who provides food for the hungry

CHOIR

—The Lord, who releases prisoners,

- 8 The Lord, who gives sight to the blind, The Lord, who raises the fallen, The Lord, who loves the righteous,
- ⁹ The Lord, who protects the stranger. He cares for the orphan and widow but frustrates the way of the wicked.²

CANTOR

¹⁰ May the Lord reign forever as king, your God, O Zion, evermore.

CHOIR

Praise The Lord!

PSALM 147

CANTOR

Praise The Lord!1

CHOIR

It is good to sing to our God, delightful to glory in praise.²

CANTOR

- ² The Lord is Jerusalem's builder. He gathers the dispersed of Israel.
- ^a He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds.
- ⁴ He controls³ the number of the stars, giving to each one a name.
- Our Master is great and powerful; his skill is beyond comprehension.
- The Lord brings relief to the needy but bends the wicked to the ground.

Choir

⁷ Respond to The Lord with confession! Serenade our God with instruments!

CANTOR

- "He covers the heavens with clouds, providing the earth with rain, causing the hills to grow grass.
- He gives the cattle their food and provides for the noisy young birds.
- ¹⁰ He scorns the strength of a horse; he does not need the legs of a man,
- but The Lord is pleased with worshippers, with those who rely on his kindness.

CHOIR

- ¹² Glorify The Lord, O Jerusalem!⁴ Praise your God, O Zion!
- ¹³ He has strengthened the locks of your gates; he has blessed your sons within you.

CANTOR

- 14 He causes your realm to prosper; he provides you with milk and wheat.
- 15 He sends his word to your land;5 his utterance travels with speed.
- ¹⁶ He gives the wooly-white snow; he scatters the frost like dust.
- ¹⁷ He sends the ice in crystals (Who can withstand his cold?)
- 18 and then gives command to melt them.
 The waters flow when his wind blows.

CHOIR

- ¹⁹ He announces his word to Jacob, his judgments and laws to Israel.
- ²⁰ He has not done this for all nations.
 They know not his judgments.
 Praise The Lord!

PSALM 148

CANTOR

Praise The Lord!¹
Praise The Lord from the heavens!
Praise him in the heights!

CHOIR

² Praise him, all his messengers! Praise him, all his armies!

CANTOR

^a Praise him, sun and moon!
Praise him, all shining stars!

CHOIR

⁴ Praise him, O heavens beyond heavens, O waters above all the heavens!²

CANTOR

⁶ Give praise to the name of The Lord! At his command you⁹ were made.

CHOIR

"He made them immovable forever; he decreed that they should remain.

CANTOR

- ⁷ Give praise to The Lord from the earth, O monsters and all powers of chaos!
- *—lightning and storm, snow and clouds, hot desert wind which blows at his word,
- mountains and all high hills, fruit-bearing trees and cedars,
- wild creature and very large beast, reptile and bird on the wing,
- ¹¹ kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all of Earth's leaders,
- ¹² healthy young men and maidens, old men and children!

CHOIR

Let them all praise the name of The Lord, his unique, inaccessible name!His glory covers Earth and Heaven.

14 He has lifted strength from his people, a hymn of praise from his saints, from Israel, the people who are near him. Praise The Lord!

PSALM 149

The theme of vengeance in this psalm suggests the story of Esther.

CANTOR

Praise The Lord!¹
Sing to The Lord a new song,
a hymn by the company of saints!

CHOIR

² Let Israel rejoice for her maker! Let Zion's sons dance for their king!

CANTOR

³ Let them praise his name with rejoicing, making music with cymbals and harps!

CHOIR

⁴ For The Lord is gracious to his people; he lifts up² the poor with salvation.

CANTOR

⁵ Let the faithful exult with pride! Let them sing with joy on their couches,

CHOIR

with the praises of God in their throats and a two-edged sword in their hands

CANTOR

⁷ —to execute vengeance on nations, to punish the peoples,

CHOIR

* to imprison their kings in chains, their leaders in fetters of iron,

CANTOR

"to execute judgments decreed! This would be glory for his saints.

CHOIR

Praise The Lord!

PSALM 150

Inasmuch as the musical instruments mentioned in this psalm are ancient and hard to identify, we have taken the liberty of substituting contemporary instruments in our translation.

CANTOR

Praise The Lord!¹
Praise God in his sanctuary!
Praise him in his mighty sky!
² Praise him for his exploits!
Praise him for his transcending greatness!

CHOIR I

³ Praise him with a blast of a trumpet!

CHOIR II

Praise him with sound of strings!

CHOIR I

4 Praise him with rhythm and dancing!

CHOIR II

Praise him with violins and flutes!

CHOIR I

⁵ Praise him with ringing of bells!

CHOIR II

Praise him with crashing of cymbals!

CANTOR

6 Let all living things praise The Lord!

Choirs

Praise The Lord!

NOTES

Abbreviations Used in the Notes

Dahood, ANB Psalms-1, Introduction, Translation and Notes by Mitchell Dahood. ("The Anchor Bible.") Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966. A second volume, Psalms-11 by Dahood has been published in 1968. Psalms 111 is yet to be published.

Gk Septuaginta. Edited by Alfred Rahlfs. 2 vols. Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1952. This is the Greek version of the Old Testament from Alexandria.

Heb Biblia Hebraica. Edited by Rudolf Kittel. Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1954. This is the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Old Testament.

Syr Any of the Syriac versions available; our source has been chiefly the critical apparatus of Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*.

Targ Any of the Targum texts available; our source has been chiefly the critical apparatus of Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*.

11QPsa

The Psalms Scroll of Qumrán Cave 11. Edited by J. A. Sanders. ("Discoveries in the Judaean Desert of Jordan," Vol. LV.) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965.

NOTES TO PSALMS 90-150

PSALM 90

- 1. Literally, "the earth and the world begun."
- 2. The Heb is quite unclear to us in vs. 5. We omit it because we cannot offer a meaningful translation.
- 3. We emend ky to my, which presents no difficulties in paleo-Hebrew script.
- 4. Perhaps either 'dny or 'lhynw should be deleted.

PSALM 91

- 1. The Heb is singular.
- 2. We paraphrase and follow the Gk.
- 3. The Heb reads "my shield."
- 4. The Heb is singular.
- 5. Literally, "young lion."
- 6. The Heb is slightly obscure here.

PSALM 92

- 1. We omit yhwh.
- 2. Literally, "you exalt my horn like an ox."
- 3. The Heb is unclear and perhaps corrupt.
- We emend biwry to bsry, which is not difficult in paleo-Hebrew script.

PSALM 93

- The Hebrew term dkym, here translated "their waves," appears also in Ugaritic literature, but is untranslatable in both cases. Our translation is conjectural.
- We follow Targ in part and shift word order for translation purposes.

- 1. We shift the order of the Heb for translation purposes only.
- 2. The Heb is obscure and perhaps corrupt.
- 3. We add one stress to the line to retain its meaning.

THE PSALMS IN MODERN SPEECH

- 4. Literally, "suddenly my life would dwell in silence."
- 5. The Heb reads "throne" but this must be a corruption of whatever word was originally there. We suggest a metathesis and read skt (succoth, tents). The taw for 'aleph in old Hebrew orthography is a likely possibility for textual corruption.

PSALM 95

- 1. Literally, "rock of our salvation."
- 2. The Hebrew word is rare and uncertain.
- 3. Literally, "like Meribah, like the day at Massa in the desert."
- 4. The Heb is somewhat unclear. Literally, it seems to say, "forty years I loathed a generation."

PSALM 96

- 1. Literally, "all the earth."
- 2. Literally, "bless his name."
- 3. Heb omits "him."
- 4. Our translation is periphrastic.
- 5. We add one stress to the line to preserve its meaning.

PSALM 97

- We translate şr'w as "back" on the basis of Dahood's insight. It fits the context much better than "foes."
- This imagery is perhaps meant to describe the flowing of waters down steep mountain slopes in a storm, for the stanza speaks in storm imagery throughout.
- 3. The Heb is somewhat unclear.
- 4. The Heb in the third persons throughout this line.
- We follow Dahood here. The alternative would be a radical emendation.
- 6. Our translation is periphrastic.

PSALM 98

 Perhaps yhwh is an addition. If so, the line should read, "make noise before the king."

- Literally, "when he sat on cherubs." In the mythological lore of Canaan, cherubs are the guardians or bearers of godly thrones.
- 2. "Stood in awe" is conjectural, for tnwt is a hapax legomenon.

- 1. In Hebrew the concept of confession includes both praise, that is, the confession of God's greatness, and the more familiar notion of acknowledging sin.
- 2 We omit "all" for metrical reasons
- 3. We emend l' to lw.

PSALM 101

- I. The Heb is somewhat unclear.
- 2. Literally, "when I do not put words of folly before my eyes."
- 3. We follow Dahood in rendering stym as "idols."
- 4. Literally, "my eyes are on the faithful of the land."
- 5. The Heb is somewhat unclear. Dahood renders lbarym as "like cattle."

PSALM 102

- 1. Literally, "let my cry come unto you,"
- 2. We follow the Targ.
- 3. Literally, "are scorched as in a hearth."
- 4. Or some similar bird.
- 5. Our translation is interpretive.
- 6. The Heb is unclear.
- 7. Literally, "is for generation and generation."
- 8. Literally, "the name of the Lord."
- 9. The Heb is somewhat unclear.
- 10. We follow 11OPsa here.
- 11. The Heb is somewhat unclear. We omit vhwh.
- 12. The Heb is slightly corrupt.
- 13. The Heb is slightly corrupt.

PSALM 103

- 1. Literally, "his righteousness is for the sons of men."
- 2. These two lines are perhaps alternate versions.
- 3. We omit yhwh to preserve the meter.

PSALM 104

1. Literally, "that they (i.e., the chaotic waters) should not return to cover the earth."

THE PSALMS IN MODERN SPEECH

- 2. A specific kind of tree now unknown to us.
- 3. The precise animal referred to is uncertain.

PSALM 105

- 1. We choose the shorter version of the patriarch's name for the sake of meter.
- 2. Literally, "the word he commanded."
- "Canaan" is properly pronounced with a break between the two a's and a shewa in the first syllable, producing three syllables: Cenáan.
- 4. We follow 11QPsa and the Gk, which read literally, "they caused bitterness with their words there."
- This translation is interpretive. Literally it reads, "of their province/border."
- 6. Literally, "first" or "head."
- 7. Literally, "silver and gold."

PSALM 106

- The Heb is somewhat unclear. We follow the Gk at one point and omit 'mk to retain the meter.
- 2. We extend this by one complete line to preserve its meaning.
- 3. The Heb is somewhat unclear. We read 'm as "people."
- 4. We read k as an emphatic particle.
- 5. We extend the line, adding one stress to preserve meaning.
- 6. We read rswn for rzwn.
- 7. We emend lhp'l to lhp's.
- 8. Older English versions read Phinehas. The accent is on the first syllable.
- 9. We add one stress to retain meaning.

PSALM 107

- 1. We emend ym to ymyn. Otherwise it reads "sea" rather than "south."
- 2. The Heb is somewhat unclear.

- The Heb is corrupt. We take py rs' and py mrmh to be alternates in the text.
- 2. The Heb is unclear.
- 3. Literally, "surrounded."
- 4. The Heb is unclear.

- 5. Literally, "out of his being judged,"
- 6. Or, "may his prayer be to no avail."
- 7. The Heb seems to be corrupt. Literally it reads, "they seek out of their ruins."
- 8. We delete "unto Yahweh" with the Syriac text.
- 9. We follow the Alexandrinus manuscript of the Gk.
- 10. The Heb also reads "remember to" before "practice."
- 11. The Heb reads, "Let him be clothed . . ."
- 12. Literally, "do with me."
- 13. The Heb is somewhat unclear.

- 1. See Psalm 68:10 for this meaning of the word.
- 2. This entire verse is quite obscure.
- 3. Malki-sedeq, rendered Melchizedek in older versions.
- 4. The Heb reads 'dny and may refer to the king. We take it to be a gloss for yhwh.
- Literally, "may be judge among nations (which are) not nations," providing we emend the text a bit. The Heb seems to be corrupt.
- 6. The Heb is quite obscure.
- 7. This is quite likely a reference to part of the ritual of coronation. Compare I Kings 1:32-34.

PSALM 111

- 1. This may be a title ("a hallelujah").
- 2. Singular in the Heb.
- 3. The Heb is somewhat unclear. Our translation is periphrastic.

PSALM 112

- 1. Perhaps a title.
- 2. Heb reads, "the Lord."

PSALM 113

Perhaps a title.

- 1. Literally, "from a people of foreign language."
- 2. Literally, "sons of a flock."
- 3. Literally, "the presence of the Master."

- Literally, "because of your kindness, because of your dependability."
- 2. Compare Psalm 135:15-18,

PSALM 116

- 1. Some ancient mss. support this. Heb reads "you."
- 2. The Gk ends the psalm here, inserts *Allelouia* and treats the rest as a separate psalm.
- 3. The Gk omits this verse.

PSALM 118

- 1. Literally, "the Lord's."
- 2. The Heb is somewhat unclear. We follow Dahood in rendering *merhab* (yah) as a name for the land of the dead, not because his evidence is thoroughly convincing but because the context here seems to demand it.
- 3. We follow the Gk.
- 4. The Heb is somewhat unclear.
- 5. Literally, "the Lord."
- 6. Heb also has "for me."
- 7. We add one beat to the line to preserve its meaning.

- 11QPsa has something else as the closing word of this line but it is too fragmentary to make out.
- 2. The Heb is unclear. We supply "protect." The text reads gl.
- 3. Literally, "my spirit clings to the dust."
- 4. The Heb is somewhat unclear.
- 5. We follow Dahood here.
- 6. We omit 'd m'd for metrical reasons.
- 7. Literally, "lift my hands to."
- 8. We follow 11QPsa, which corrects the old corrupt reading.
- 9. We add one stress to the line to retain meaning.
- 10. The Heb is slightly enigmatic.
- 11. Is this written on behalf of Jerusalem?
- 12. We follow 11QPsa.
- Literally, "which is not according to your word." 11QPsa reads, "who are not among the pursuers of justice."
- 14. We add one stress to the line to retain meaning.

- 15. Heb reads "my hands." Inasmuch as this idiom is unclear we have followed the reading of some Gk manuscripts and the Syr.
- 16. The meaning of the Heb is uncertain.
- 17. The Heb text is pointed to read "you eliminate" but both the Gk and 11QPsa read as we translate.
- 18. Or, "it is time to act for the Lord" (so the Gk).

- 1. A territory in Asia Minor? The accent is on the first syllable.
- 2. A territory in Arabia? The accent is on the last syllable.
- 3. This is modern Amman, the ancient capital of the Ammonites. The accent is on the last syllable.
- 4. The Heb is somewhat obscure.

PSALM 121

- 1. Or, "where does my help come from?"
- 2. 11OPsa reads as follows:

The Lord guards you at night, a shield upon your right side.

We render "upon your right side" as "close to your side." The right side was the vulnerable side of an ancient warrior.

- 3. We omit "all" for metrical reasons.
- 4. We omit yhwh as a gloss.

PSALM 122

- 1. We add one stress to each line to preserve meaning.
- 2. Literally, "in your gates, O Jerusalem."
- 3. The Heb is somewhat unclear and perhaps corrupt. 11QPsa omits yhdw and reads lw for lh. Following that text we would translate literally, "Jerusalem was built as a city to be joined to it."
- 4. We follow 11QPsa here.
- 5. Literally, "may peace be among your army."

PSALM 123

1. The Heb is somewhat unclear in this line.

PSALM 124

1. We add one stress to the line to retain meaning.

- 1. The Heb seems to be slightly corrupt here.
- 2. 11QPsa has a plural participle at one point here.

PSALM 127

- 1. Literally, "you who eat bread of idols." The idea behind idol worship is that one gets no bread unless he brings his offering to the gods. Hence, our interpretive translation.
- 2. The exact meaning of the Hebrew idiom is somewhat unclear. Perhaps it merely means "vigorous sons."
- 3. The Heb text uses the singular in this line. We translate with plurals to conform to the next line.
- 4. We follow Dahood in translating dbr as "drive away."

PSALM 128

1. We substitute "God" for "the Lord" for metrical reasons.

PSALM 129

1. We follow 11QPsa here.

PSALM 130

- 1. Heb reads "his" but one ancient Gk version reads "your."
- The Heb and Gk texts are both confusing here. We emend by removing the first occurrence of *lbqr*. Gk keeps this but adds "until night."

PSALM 132

- 1. An ancient name for God. In Canaanite 'byr (here translated "strength") describes things of unusual strength, such as an ox, the wings of an eagle, or even the male sex organ.
- 2. Or, "your mighty ark."
- 3. Or, "set up a dynasty."
- 4. The Hebrew idiom is somewhat unclear.

PSALM 133

 We add one stress to retain meaning. The pouring of oil on the head in such profusion signified the utmost of luxury and comfort.

- 1. We follow the Gk here.
- 2. Literally, "lift your hands."

PSALM 135

- 1. Perhaps a title.
- 2. At this point 11QPsa adds the following:

There is none who can do what he does, who can act like the King of Gods.

- 3. The accent is on the last syllable: see-hon.
- 4. We remind the reader that this is the sacred name, Yahweh, which may mean "he brings into being."
- 5. Compare Psalm 115:4-8.

PSALM 136

- 1. We omit one stress. Literally it reads, "... and the stars to rule in the night."
- 2. Literally, "Pharaoh and his army."
- 3. The accent is on the last syllable.
- 4. The accent is on the last syllable.

PSALM 137

- 1. The exact significance of this is hard to determine. Did they hang them because they had no further use for them or was this part of the procedure of playing the instrument?
- 2. We follow the Gk here, which reads literally, "those who took us away." We use "foes" for metrical reasons.
- 3. We follow Dahood in rendering skh as "shrivel up."
- 4. Literally, "the day of Jerusalem."
- 5. Read this with the accent on "your."

- 1. We follow 11QPsa here.
- 2. Or, "gods." The Heb is somewhat unclear.
- 3. "Your word" is an alternate in the text.
- 4. The Heb is slightly unclear.
- 5. Heb reads bqrb. 11QPsa reads btwk.
- We have translated all the imperfects as imperatives in this verse, a possibility which is allowed by the voluntative nature of this verb form in some contexts.

- 1. The Heb is corrupt and unclear. We follow the Gk, though we still desire more clarity.
- 2. "Organs" is not a euphemism. Some specific set of bodily organs is designated by the Hebrew, perhaps "kidneys."
- 3. We follow 11QPsa here, which reads 'sby for 'smy.
- 4. The Heb is somewhat unclear. Our translation is periphrastic.
- 5. Literally, "I awake."
- 6. The Heb is unclear.
- 7. Heb also has "O Lord," which we omit for metrical reasons.
- 8. Literally, "know my mind."

PSALM 140

- 1. The Heb has the singular, as above.
- 2. The Heb is unclear.
- 3. We omit 'dny as a gloss.
- The Heb is unclear and perhaps corrupt. The situation continues through vs. 12. Hence, our translation is tentative throughout.
- 5. We emend ymytw to ymtyr on the basis of parallels.
- Literally, "into mhmrwt (from which) they cannot rise." Ugaritic
 usage of this word (67:1:7-8) suggests "throat" or "gullet." The
 Arabic cognate would permit even something like "lava flow"
 in this context.
- 7. We add one beat to the line to preserve meaning.

PSALM 141

- Perhaps this should be included in the first stanza, with the idea that God should watch the lips to observe that they are praying.
- 2. The Heb becomes increasingly unclear in this verse.
- The Heb continues to become unclear and corrupt—to such a degree that our translation of vss. 6-7 is quite tentative.
- 4. The Heb is somewhat unclear.

- I. We follow 1IQPsa here, which has 'syhh for 'swhh.
- 2. Literally, "at morning."
- 3. Literally, "lift up my soul unto you."
- 4. We extend the line to retain its meaning.

PSAIM 144

- 1. 11OPsa omits this.
- 2. Literally, "right arm."
- 3. The ancient texts are in great tension here. The question: whether vss. 12–14 describe the "strangers" of vs. 11 or the pious worshippers. The Gk and Syr read "their" for "our" throughout this section and by the normal rules of textual criticism, which demand the more difficult reading in a case like this, these versions should be the more authentic.
- 4. If the Gk and Syr are correct above (we have chosen the Heb), then these two lines must be considered a later addition. Indeed, if the Heb represents an altered text, we would suspect that those who did the altering also added these lines.

PSALM 145

- 1. There is confusion of person here in the ancient versions. The Gk has the third person throughout vss. 5-6.
- 2. Literally, "let them say the . . ."
- 3. These two lines are only found in 11QPsa.
- 4. 11QPsa adds the following, which is incomplete due to the damaged condition of the scroll: "this shall be as a memorial for I(srael) and for . . ."

PSALM 146

- 1. This is considered a title in the Gk, which adds, "by Haggai and Zechariah."
- 2. 11QPsa adds about three lines here. They are incomplete due to the damaged condition of the scroll and read, in part: "... from the Lord, all the earth, from ... in his knowing of all his works, in ... his mighty acts."

- 1. This is considered a title in the Gk, which adds, "by Haggai and Zechariah."
- 2. We translate n'wh as a verb, following Dahood.
- 3. Literally, "counts."
- The Gk divides this psalm as two and begins the second at this point.
- 5. The Heb is somewhat unclear.

THE PSALMS IN MODERN SPEECH

PSALM 148

- 1. This is considered a title in the Gk, which adds, "by Haggai and Zechariah."
- 2. The ancients envisioned waters where we envision space.
- 3. Literally, "they."
- 4. Or, "for."

PSALM 149

- 1. The Gk treats this as a title.
- 2. We follow the Gk here. Heb reads "adorns."

PSALM 150

1. The Gk treats this as a title.

TEXT: 11 on 13 and 10 on 11 Intertype Garamond DISPLAY: Garamont PAPER: Supple Offset

The Psalms in Modern Speech

For Public and Private Use

translated by RICHARD S. HANSON

Volume 1—Introduction and Psalms 1-41 Volume 2—Psalms 42-89 Volume 3—Psalms 90-150

In rendering the Psalter usable both in group and private worship, this remarkable translation of the Book of Psalms also makes a solid contribution to scholarship.

The Psalms are divided into meaningful groups of two or more verses, with instructions for responsive reading by the Cantor, Choir I, and Choir II. The author has followed the meter and captured the movement of the Hebrew poetry. He has divided each Psalm for responsive reading in a way intended by the Hebrew rubrics. This system, together with the striking limpidity of the translation, provides the reader with a greater insight into the Psalms, and makes this book a valuable addition to the congregation's worship materials. The Introduction in Volume 1 is a thorough statement which introduces the non-specialist to the role of the Psalms in Old Testament life, to the linguistic problems of translation, and to the enriching possibilities which the Psalms offer to contemporary worship. Helpful notes are included at the end of each volume.

Richard S. Hanson is a member of the faculty of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa. His doctoral work was done at Harvard University.

cover art by Tom Irons

FORTRESS PRESS PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19129

\$1.95 each, \$5.50 a set